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Fresh Rhubarb Tart

Serves 6 - 8

This fruit tart is one of our signature desserts when we entertain in early summer. The strips of rhubarb woven into a lattice design create a stunning presentation. The tart, rhubarb flavor compliments the rich, vanilla pastry cream filling and sweet crust. Adapt the recipe by using different shapes and sizes of tart pans, or top the crust and custard with different seasonal fruits.

Pâte Sucrée Crust Ingredients:

2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
4 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cold, grated
2 large egg yolks
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon almond extract
1/4 cup water, ice cold, (add by the tablespoon)
3 oz white chocolate, melted

Custard Ingredients:

2 cups whole milk
6 large yolks
1/2 cup sugar
1/3 cup cornstarch, sifted
2 teaspoons pure vanilla bean paste
1 teaspoon pure vanilla bean extract
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter

Topping:

3 stalks rhubarb, sliced into thin slices
2 oz strawberry jam, for glazing the top

The Crust Directions:

1. MIX THE FLOUR, sugar, and salt together and whisk to evenly distribute ingredients.
2. WITH A PASTRY BLENDER, or by pulsing in a food processor, cut in the butter with the flour mixture until a coarse crumb forms with some butter pieces left the size of small peas.
3. ADD THE EGG YOLKS, vanilla extract, and 1 tablespoon of ice water. Stir or pulse to combine. Add additional cold water by the tablespoon until the dough just comes together in a ball. Avoid adding too much water.

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4. PAT THE DOUGH into a flat disk, wrap in plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for an hour or overnight.
5. ROLL THE DOUGH out to a 1/8-inch thickness and place in a removable bottom tart pan. Trim the edges to the top of the tart pan. Chill again for one hour.
6. PREHEAT THE OVEN to 375°F. Dock or prick the crust with the tines of a fork to vent the crust as it bakes. Place pie weights, or use dried beans with parchment inside the tart crust and bake for 20-25 minutes or until the crust springs back when touched, and the edges begin to turn a golden brown. (Baking times will vary based on the pan, oven, and crust thickness.)
7. ALLOW THE TART CRUST TO COOL completely in the pan on a cooling rack.
8. ONCE COOLED, melt the white chocolate in a microwave (in 30 second intervals). "Paint" the melted white chocolate on the bottom and sides of the cooled crust in a thin layer leaving the top edge "unpainted." Allow the chocolate to cool and harden. (This thin layer of chocolate keeps the tart's crust from becoming soggy, and will not be noticeable in the final product.)

The Filling Directions:

1. HEAT THE MILK in a small saucepan or microwave until quite hot, nearly boiling.
2. IN A 3-QUART SAUCEPAN, place the egg yolks, sugar and cornstarch. Whisk to combine. Temper the eggs by adding a 1/2-cup of the hot milk to the egg yolk mixture whisking vigorously. Continue adding the hot milk in 1/2-cup increments, continuously whisking until all milk is added.
3. OVER MEDIUM HEAT, place the saucepan. Cook the mixture, continuously whisking. The mixture will begin to thicken, then reach the boiling point. Remove from heat. Add the vanilla. Add the butter, one tablespoon at a time, whisking until melted after each addition.
4. TRANSFER THE CUSTARD to a large glass bowl. Place a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface of the custard to prevent the formation of a "skin." Allow to cool, then store in the refrigerator for 1 hour, or until ready to assemble.
5. SPOON AND SPREAD the cooled custard into the cooled tart crust. Fill the crust to just below the top of the tart's crust.

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The Rhubarb Lattice Directions:

1. PREPARE THE RHUBARB by trimming and washing well.
2. CUT THE RHUBARB into very thin strips using a handheld mandoline or vegetable peeler.
3. PARBOIL THE STRIPS for 1 minute, and remove carefully with tongs.
4. ONCE THE STRIPS have cooled, weave them into a lattice pattern upside down on parchment paper large enough to cover the tart.
5. CAREFULLY PLACE THE LATTICE on top of the tart, and trim with kitchen shears.
6. JUST PRIOR TO SERVING, gently heat the strawberry jam in a small saucepan with one tablespoon of water. Then paint the top of the rhubarb with the strawberry glaze using a pastry brush.
7. CHILL FOR AT LEAST 30 MINUTES to set the glaze, cut into pieces and serve on your best dessert plates.