

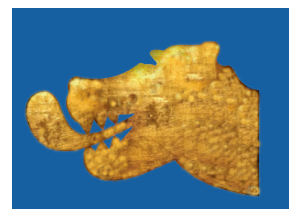
French Country Cooking at Château L'Age Baston

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Strawberry Tart (Serves 8)

For the Pastry

150g plain flour
75g butter, slightly softened
75g caster sugar
3 large egg yolks

For the Custard (Crème Anglaise)

500ml full cream milk
6 large egg yolks
75g caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 tablespoons plain flour
1 tablespoon cornflour
The finely grated zest of 1 lemon

For the topping

800g strawberries
3 tablespoons redcurrant jelly
icing sugar

First make the pastry by mixing the flour, butter and sugar in a food processor until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the egg yolks and when the dough has come together tip onto a lightly floured work surface. Gently knead until smooth. Then rap in cling film and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Then make the custard by gently warming the milk in a saucepan. Then in a large bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, sugar and vanilla extract until thick, pale and creamy. Add the flour, cornflour and lemon zest and whisk until smooth. Gradually add the warmed milk to the mixture whisking all the time. Transfer the mixture back into the saucepan and cook on a very low heat until the custard starts to thicken and bubble. Cook for a further 1-2 minutes, stirring continuously. Remove from the heat and leave to cool. Cover with cling film to prevent a skin forming.

Grease a loose bottomed 23cm non stick flan tin. Knead the chilled pastry lightly to soften. Roll out the pastry on a floured board and then gently press into the flan tin. Prick the base with a fork, cover with baking parchment and fill with baking beans. Chill for 15 minutes and then bake in a preheated oven at 190°C for 15-20 minutes. Remove the beans and bake for about 5 more minutes until the pastry is cooked and golden brown. When cool, spoon on the custard, top with the strawberries, drizzle over a little warmed redcurrant jelly and dust with icing sugar. Serve immediately.

NB: You can make the pastry and the custard in advance and assemble just before serving. If you assemble things too early you run the risk of the pastry going 'soggy'!