



### Fig Tart with Vanilla Crème Pâtissière

*This tart has several steps, but is very easy to make. The basic pie crust recipe can be used for many filled tarts and pies, so it's a useful base recipe to learn. The combination of aromatic vanilla and sweet fig is alluring without being overpowering, and we couldn't resist gilding the lily by drizzling sweet honey over the top!*

6 servings

#### Ingredients

##### *For the tart shell:*

1¼ cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon confectioner's sugar  
Pinch of salt  
3½ ounces very cold butter, cut into small pieces  
1 egg yolk  
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon  
A sprinkle of cold water, if necessary

##### *For the vanilla crème pâtissière:*

6 egg yolks  
3/8 cup confectioner's sugar  
2½ cups heavy cream  
1 vanilla bean, split and seeds scraped

##### *For the fig topping:*

6 ripe figs  
¼ cup confectioner's sugar  
2 cups water  
2 tablespoons honey

#### Equipment

Food processor  
9-inch loose bottom fluted tart pan (or mini-tartlet pans for individual servings)  
Rolling pin  
Heatproof mixing bowl  
Parchment paper

#### Preparation

##### *Prepare the pastry shell:*

Put the flour, sugar and salt in a food processor and pulse to combine. Add the chilled butter and process in short pulses until the mixture resembles bread crumbs. Turn out into a large mixing bowl, add the egg yolk and lemon zest and bring the dough together with your hands. Sprinkle a little cold water if necessary to bring the dough together.

Flour a clean counter or marble cutting board lightly, and roll out the dough to about 2 inches wider than the tart pan. Carefully roll the dough onto the rolling pin and transfer to the tart pan. Gently press it into the pan to fit, being careful not to stretch the dough. Roll the rolling pin over the edges of the pan to trim the excess dough. Place a piece of parchment paper or foil into the tart shell, fill with pie

September 2006

weights, dried beans or rice and chill in the refrigerator for 20-30 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 375° F.

Remove the pastry shell from the refrigerator and blind bake for 15 minutes. Remove the parchment paper and pie weights and return the tart shell to the oven for another 10 minutes, until it is golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely.

*[Chef's Note: Baking blind is the process of pre-baking an empty pie shell for a cream-filled pie or tart which will not be baked further, or which will only be baked for a short time after filling. The key is to "dock" the pie crust by lightly pricking it all over with a fork, then placing a parchment paper in the center and filling with pie weights such as metal pellets, dry beans or uncooked rice.]*

*Make the vanilla crème patissière:*

Whisk the eggs yolks and the sugar in a heatproof bowl placed over a pan of barely simmering water. Whisk constantly until the mixture has thickened, about 8-10 minutes. In a separate pan, heat the heavy cream and the split vanilla bean and vanilla seeds. Bring to a boil, then whisk into the egg and sugar mixture, stirring constantly to thicken, 5-8 minutes more.

Remove the custard from the heat and remove the vanilla bean. Let cool completely, then pour into the tart shell, and chill in the refrigerator for 3-4 hours to set.

*[Chef's Note: Wipe the vanilla bean dry with a paper towel and reserve it for use in another recipe. You can place it in a jar of sugar to give the sugar a nice aroma.]*

*Prepare the figs:*

Put the figs, the confectioner's sugar and the water in a pan and bring to a boil. Poach the figs gently for about 10 minutes, then drain and cool.

#### Service

Cut the figs in half lengthwise and arrange around the chilled tart, cut side up. Drizzle lightly with honey and serve.

#### Variations

The chilled vanilla crème tart can be served on its own, or topped with any number of fruit toppings. Try a mixture of berries, pomegranate seeds, or currants.

For a tropical variation, use a pounded stalk of lemongrass in place of the vanilla, and top with slices of mango and papaya.

You can also make individual tartlets using small tart pans. If so, slice the figs crosswise into thinner slices, and overlap them around the tartlet.

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September 2006