

Egg Custard Tarts

Another One Bites The Crust

(Oxford Tearoom Mysteries ~ Book 7)

INGREDIENTS:

For the Pastry

- 225 g (8 ounces) (2 scant cups) all-purpose flour
- 85 g (3 ounces) (1/3 cup + 1 tablespoon) caster (granulated) sugar
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
- 150 g (5.3 ounces) (2/3 cup) cold butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 whole egg + 1 egg yolk, beaten together
- 1 egg yolk, for brushing on pastry during baking

For the custard:

- 375 g (13.25 ounces) (1-2/3 cups) heavy cream
- 90 g (3.2 ounces) (1/3 cup) whole milk
- 2 whole eggs + 2 egg yolks



INSTRUCTIONS:

Cake:

1. Don't preheat the oven since dough needs to chill before baking.
2. Place the flour, sugar, salt and nutmeg in the bowl of a food processor and pulse to combine. Alternately you can whisk the ingredients together in a mixing bowl.
3. Add the cold butter to the flour mixture and either pulse in the food processor or cut in with a fork or pastry cutter until it resembles bread crumbs.

4. Add 3/4 of the beaten egg and egg yolk to the flour mixture and pulse (or mix by hand) just until dough comes together. If mixture is too dry, add remaining egg.
5. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and gather into a disk. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.
6. Roll the dough out and cut into circles large enough to fit your tartlet pan or mini muffin pan. You can do a combination of sizes. Press the dough circles into the pans.
7. Place pieces of foil over each pastry shell then refrigerate for 30 minutes.
8. Preheat oven to 180 C / 350 F degrees.
9. Remove the pastry shells from the refrigerator and place either baking beans or rice on top of the foil, filling almost to the top. This will prevent the dough from slumping during baking.
10. Bake for 15 minutes then remove the foil along with the rice or beans.
11. Return the pastry shells to the oven and bake an additional 5 minutes.
12. Remove from the oven and brush each pastry shell with the beaten egg yolk.
13. Return to the oven and bake an additional 5 minutes.
14. Remove pastry shells from the oven and reduce the oven temperature to 120 C / 250 F degrees.

Custard:

1. Place the cream and milk in a medium sauce pan over medium-low heat. Stirring very frequently, heat just until small bubbles form around the edges of the pan.
2. Whisk the eggs, egg yolks, sugar and vanilla together.
3. Once the cream is hot, very, very slowly add to the egg and sugar mixture, whisking constantly. Don't be tempted to add all at once or you'll end up with scrambled eggs.
4. Fill the pre-baked pastry shells with the custard, making sure to fill them evenly so that they cook in the same amount of time. Grate fresh nutmeg over the tops of the custard.

5. Bake 18 - 30 minutes, depending on size of the tartlets.* The custard should be mostly set but the middle should have a faint jiggle.
6. Remove from the oven and cool to room temperature before serving.

Tips:

1. *The tartlets I baked using a mini muffin tin took 18 minutes. The small tartlet pans took 20 - 25 minutes. Keep a close watch and check for doneness often.
2. You can use a large tart pan and bake for 35 - 45 minutes.
3. You may substitute your favorite pre-made refrigerated pie pastry dough (such as Pillsbury) instead of making the pastry from scratch. Just be sure to pre-bake it and brush with egg yolk so that the crust doesn't get soggy from the custard.
4. If you have any leftover custard filling, pour into small ramekins. Place the ramekins into a shallow baking dish and place in the oven. Carefully fill the shallow dish with hot water halfway up the ramekins. Bake at 163C/325F degrees for 25 – 35 minutes, just until set and the middle still jiggles a bit. Remove ramekins from the hot water, chill thoroughly and enjoy!

Enjoy!