

Congress Tarts

Extract from Marguerite Patten "Post War Kitchen"

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Quantity: 9-12 tartlets

When ground almonds came back on the market I had many enquiries about how to make real marzipan or almond paste and requests for recipes such as this one. I had demonstrated Mock Congress Tarts many times in the war years using semolina or fine breadcrumbs, with almond essence and lemon squash to give a semblance of the correct flavours.

For the shortcrust or sweet shortcrust pastry:

6 oz (175 g) flour
3 oz butter or margarine
1.5 oz caster sugar
Little milk to bind

For the filling:

little jam
2 oz (50 g) butter or margarine
2 oz (50 g) caster sugar
1/2-1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 egg
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 oz (50 g) ground almonds

To decorate

9-12 blanched almonds

Preheat the oven to 190-200°C (375-400°F), Gas Mark 5-6. Use the higher setting for shallow tartlets and the lower one for deeper tarts.

Make the pastry: Sift the flour into a mixing bowl or the bowl of an electric mixer, add the butter or margarine and rub in by hand, or switch on the mixer, until the consistency is fine breadcrumbs. Do not over-handle. Add the sugar and gather the dough together. Gradually add sufficient milk to make a dough with a soft consistency.

Roll out the pastry and line 9-12 patty tins. Put a teaspoon of jam into each pastry case.

Cream the butter or margarine with the sugar and lemon zest. Beat the egg with the lemon juice and add to the creamed mixture together with the ground almonds. Spoon over the jam, top with an almond and bake for 15-20 minutes.