

# Lemon Meringue Tarts

Makes Twelve 4" Tarts

## Almond Pastry

- 1 cup whole almonds
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature, cut into six pieces
- ½ cup icing sugar
- Zest from 2 lemons
- 4 yolks, room temperature
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ tsp salt

## Lemon Curd

- ¾ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice, about 3 lemons
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 7 large egg yolks
- ¼ cup + 2 Tbsp unsalted butter, room temperature

## Meringue

- 7 large egg whites
- 1¼ cups + 2 Tbsp sugar
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp cream of tartar

## Meringue

- 12 four-inch tart molds
- 12 paper baking cups (or parchment paper cut to size)
- a candy thermometer
- a brûlée torch. If you don't have a torch, you can toast the meringue under a broiler (although a torch provides more control).

- Pie weights: beans or rice to prevent the pastry from buckling in the oven.

*Please note, the pastry and curd can be made in advance but the meringue must be made the day your serving the tarts.*

## **Almond Pastry**

Preheat oven to 350°F.

This dough behaves more like a soft cookie dough, rather than a typical pastry dough. It is easy to work with when the dough is chilled. Whenever it becomes too soft, simply refrigerate until it firms up. For this reason, I divide the dough in two batches, keeping one in the fridge.

Place the almonds in a food processor with the granulated sugar and process until finely ground.

In the bowl of a standup mixer fitted with a paddle attachment (or a medium bowl, if mixing by hand), cream together the butter, icing sugar and lemon zest until well combined. Add the yolks and mix until well combined, scraping the bowl with a flexible spatula as necessary. Add the flour, salt and ground almond mixture and mix until combined. The mixture should resemble a sticky cookie dough.

Scrape half the dough onto a sheet of parchment generously dusted with flour. Press the dough into a squat disk and cover with plastic wrap. Use a rolling pin to flatten the dough to a rough circle approximately ½ inch thick. Cover completely and refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Line the tart molds with the paper baking cups or parchment paper cut to size. The molds need to be *completely* covered with paper, otherwise you won't be able to release the tarts without breaking them. (It's fine if your paper overlaps the molds.)

Remove half the dough from the fridge and roll the dough approximately 1/8 inch thick. Using a cup or small bowl slightly larger than the tart molds, cut the dough into 6 circles. Using a spatula (or your hands), carefully transfer the circles of dough to the paper-lined molds. Cover with plastic wrap and gently press the dough (through the plastic) against the molds' edges and base, aiming for a uniform layer of dough. (If the dough becomes too soft to work with, refrigerate until firm.) Repeat with the remaining dough, gathering and re-rolling any remaining scraps of dough. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Remove the plastic wrap from the tart molds and pierce the base and sides of the pastry with the tines of a fork. Place six tarts on a baking tray, cover each tart with a small square of parchment (or foil) and fill with pie weights, beans or rice. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Bake 20 minutes, turning the baking trays once during baking to ensure the tarts bake evenly. Remove the tarts from the oven and carefully remove the pie weights and parchment (or foil). Return the tarts to the oven and continue to bake, uncovered, another 5-7 minutes or until the pastry is browned and cooked through. Cool completely on baking rack (do not remove molds yet). Refrigerate to firm and remove the molds only when completely chilled.

## **Lemon Curd**

Fit a heat-resistant bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. The bowl should not touch the water. Pour the lemon juice, sugar and yolks in the bowl and stir constantly with a small whisk, until thickened. This can take up to eight minutes. When the lemon curd is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, remove from heat and add the butter, stirring to combine.

Cool slightly, then distribute the curd evenly amongst the chilled tarts. Refrigerate while preparing the meringue.

## **Meringue**

Place the metal bowl of a standup mixer, or a deep metal mixing bowl, over a saucepan of simmering water. The water should not touch the bowl. (Have a dry towel or pot holder handy to grasp the hot bowl.)

Place the egg whites, sugar, salt and cream of tartar in the bowl and clip the thermometer onto the bowl, ensuring it reaches the egg whites. Mix the whites with a spatula, stirring constantly until the mixture reaches 175°F. (The whites will not expand at this stage.)

Remove the bowl from the heat and whisk with an electric mixer at high speed until billowy and satiny, being mindful not to over-whip the meringue. This can take up to six minutes.

Place a generous dollop of meringue onto each tart, using your spoon to spread the meringue to the tart's edge. Create peaks by dipping the spoon into the meringue, then lifting. Use a torch to gently toast the meringue. Alternatively, place the tarts briefly under the broiler, watching them carefully to avoid burning.

# Pavlova

Serves 5 to 6

## Meringue

- 4 large fresh egg whites, room temperature
- 1 cup extra-fine granulated sugar (also referred to as berry sugar)
- 1/2 Tbsp cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp white vinegar

## Toppings

- 1 1/2 cups 35% cream (whipping cream), chilled
- 1 1/2 Tbsps granulated sugar
- 1 pound of fresh strawberries, cleaned and hulled (green leafy top removed)
- 1 pound frozen or fresh berries for the sauce (I use frozen raspberries to give the sauce its vibrant colour, as strawberries tend to fade when pureed or mashed.)

## Optional Garnishes

- 1/4 cup dried or fresh blueberries
- fresh mint
- confectioners' sugar

## Cooking Instructions

Line a baking tray with parchment paper or a non-stick baking mat. Preheat oven to 200°F.

Before you start, ensure your metal, glass or ceramic mixing bowl and whisk are scrupulously clean—the egg whites will not increase in volume if inadvertently mixed with traces of fat, such as egg yolk.

Using a stand or hand-held mixer, whisk the egg whites at medium-high speed until a dense network of foam appears. Slowly add the extra-fine sugar in a thin stream, continuing to whisk as you do. Increase the speed to high and whip until glossy, stiff peaks appear. Reduce the speed to low, add the cornstarch and vinegar and whisk until just incorporated.

Spoon the meringue in large mounds, and flatten them with the back of a spoon.

Bake the meringues for about an hour or longer until completely dry. Turn the oven off and leave the meringues inside until completely cooled. The meringues will crack slightly, and the colour will change from bright white to ivory. If not using immediately, store meringues in an airtight container with parchment layered between each meringue for up to 2 weeks in a cool dry place.

## **Berry Sauce**

Thaw the berries, if using frozen, and place them in a fine-mesh strainer placed over a bowl. If using fresh berries, remove the greens, and puree them before placing them in the strainer. Using the back of a ladle or large spoon, press the berries against the strainer to extract as much juice as possible, discarding the seeds and pulp. Pour the juice into a small saucepan and simmer over low heat until slightly reduced. If you'd like to add sugar, add as much or as little as you wish, stirring until the sugar has completely dissolved.

## **Whipping Cream**

When ready to serve, whip the cream with the sugar until soft peaks appear.

Place the baked meringue on a plate or tray, add as much whipped cream as desired, scatter with strawberries and drizzle a bit of fruit puree. Garnish with dried or fresh blueberries, fresh mint and confectioners' sugar. Serve additional whipped cream and fruit puree on the side.

Best enjoyed the day it's made.

–

For smaller meringue, an Eaton Mess style dessert, spoon the meringue into a pastry bag fitted with a plain tip. Pipe in small, flat, concentric circles (ideally sized to fit your dessert glasses).

To serve: Layer transparent glasses with fruit, cream, fruit puree and meringue whole or broken in pieces. Garnish with pistachio nuts if desired.