

I would like to share some of our recipes, which our Kitchen Team prepares with pride and skill for you on a daily basis. We hope you enjoy making this recipe as much as we do.

The Europe's Mince Pies

Ingredients (Makes 24 mince pies)

For the pastry cases:

- 250g plain flour, plus extra to dust
- 25g icing sugar
- 125g chilled unsalted butter, diced finely
- grated zest of 1 orange
- 1 medium egg, lightly beaten
- 1–3 tsp ice-cold water (if needed)
- To finish:
- 1 egg yolk, beaten with 1 tsp water (eggwash)
- to glaze icing sugar or caster sugar, to dust

Method

- For the pastry, put the flour, icing sugar, butter and orange zest into a food processor and whizz to fine crumbs. With the motor running, add the egg and whiz for a few seconds until the mixture forms clumps and you can press it together into a ball. (If necessary, add 1–3 tsp ice-cold water to bring the dough together.)
- Turn onto a very lightly floured surface and knead briefly until smooth. Wrap in cling film and chill for at least 30 minutes, or until firm. (The pastry can be made up to 3 days ahead or frozen for up to a month.)
- Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to the thickness of 4mm. Using an 8cm fluted cutter, cut out 24 rounds and use to line two 12-hole non-stick mince pie tins.
- Option 1: Re-roll the trimmings to the same thickness and stamp out 24 stars or Christmas trees, with an appropriate cutter, for the tops.
- Option 2: Shortcrust topping
 - 250g unsalted Butter
 - 110g caster sugar
 - 360g plain flour
 - 4 g salt
 - 2 g vanilla extract

- Whip the soft butter with caster sugar and vanilla extract, when white & fluffy fold in the flour and salt
- Keep whipping it until you have a soft dough you can pipe onto the filled tartlets
- Bake with the filling for 20-25min at 160C
- Put a dessert spoonful (2 tsp) filling into each pastry case, then press the tops in position. Chill for at least 20 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4.
- Brush the tops with the eggwash, then bake the mince pies for 15–20 minutes until the pastry is golden and crisp. Let cool for a few minutes before removing from the tins and transferring to a wire rack to cool. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 week. Warm slightly before serving, with a dusting of sugar.

For the Filling:

- 450g Plums, halved and stoned
- 1/2 Lemons, zest & Juice
- 30ml water- not needed if plums are frozen
- 2 lg Cooking apples
- 35g Currents
- 35g Raisins
- 35g sultanas
- 35 g mixed Peel
- 35 nibbed almonds
- 120 g sugar
- 1.5 g ground ginger
- 1.5 g ground cinnamon
- 1.5 g ground cloves
- Good dash of Brandy if liked

Method

- Cook plums with Lemon & Water until tender, and solid consistency
- Liquidise
- Peel & grate apples and add to the plum mix
- Add all other ingredients including lemon zest & Brandy
- Cool down before filling into the tartlets