

Homemade Lemon Tarts
makes 8 tarts, each one serving 2 people
{adapted from *The Pastry Queen*}

CRUST

1 1/2 cups sliced almonds
1 cup {2 sticks} unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus about 2 tablespoons for greasing the tart pans
1 cup powdered sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt

LEMON CURD

10 extra-large egg yolks
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
Zest of 2 lemons
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

WHIPPED CREAM TOPPING

2 cups chilled heavy whipping cream
3/4 cup powdered sugar

To make the CRUSTS...

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Arrange the almonds on a baking sheet in a single layer and toast them in the oven for 5 to 7 minutes. Coarsely chop the nuts.

With your fingers, butter eight 1-cup capacity disposable foil tartlet pans {measuring 4 3/8 inches in diameter by 1 3/16 inches high}, using about 2 tablespoons softened unsalted butter total.

Using a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar in a large bowl on medium-high speed until fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the vanilla, then gradually add the flour and salt and combine on low speed until incorporated. Add the nuts and mix on low speed just until they are incorporated. Form the dough into a ball--it will be sticky--and cover it with plastic wrap. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Remove the dough from the refrigerator, divide into 8 equal portions, and press into the prepared pans, making sure it comes up to the top edge of the pans. If the dough sticks to your hands, dust them with flour as often as necessary.

Bake the crusts about 20 minutes, until golden brown. Remove from the oven and cool at least 30 minutes before filling with lemon curd. {Don't worry if the tart bottoms look

wrinkly.} At this point, the crusts can be cooled and stored in airtight containers for up to 2 days.

To make the LEMON CURD...

Whisk the egg yolks, sugar, lemon juice, and zest in the top of a double-boiler or in a glass or metal bowl placed over a saucepan filled with 2 inches of simmering water {the simmering water should not touch the bowl}. Add the butter to the egg yolk mixture and whisk until melted and smooth. Cook about 40 minutes, stirring lightly with a whisk about every 15 minutes. The curd should be thick, resembling the consistency of loose custard. Transfer the warm mixture to a bowl and cover it with plastic wrap, pressing the wrap onto the surface of the curd, sealing it and leaving no air between the wrap and the curd. Refrigerate the curd for at least 4 hours and up to 3 days.

To make the WHIPPED CREAM TOPPING...

Using a mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, whip the cream in a large bowl on high speed until soft peaks form. Add the powdered sugar and whip until thoroughly combined.

Gently remove the cooled crusts from the foil pans. Spoon equal amounts of the lemon curd into each crust and top with whipped cream. Serve immediately.

****NOTES****

Curd can be tricky. Though I have not tried it myself, I have heard friends talk about pre-made curd they have found at specialty food stores {like Central Market and Williams-Sonoma}. Purchased curd would simplify this recipe, without sacrificing very much quality.