

Richmond Maids of Honor

Tradition is that these little cakes were named maids of honor after the maids of honor who served at Richmond Palace in the 16th century. They can be eaten hot or cold.

Ingredients

Half a 1 ½ pound pack of fresh puff pastry

Flour for dusting

8 oz cream cheese

1 ½ oz superfine sugar

Grated zest from 1 lemon

1 oz ground almonds

1 ½ oz whole candied peel, finely chopped

1 large egg, plus one large egg yolk

2 Tbsp lemon curd

Confectioners' sugar for dusting

Pre-heat oven to 400F. Yields 18 cakes.

You will need a 4 inch plain cutter and two 12-hole shallow bun trays.

Begin by cutting the block of pastry in half so that you have two squares and then sprinkle a surface with flour and roll each piece into a square of about 11 inches. Then, using the cutter, cut out 8 circles from each piece. Be careful as you do this – just give the cutter a sharp tap and lift it, don't be tempted to twist it. Now line the tins with the pastry rounds. You should have 18 total.

In a bowl, combine the cream cheese, sugar, lemon zest, ground almonds and chopped candied peel. Then in a separate bowl, beat the egg and egg yolk and add to the rest of the ingredients. Mix very thoroughly with a large fork until everything is evenly blended.

Next, spoon half a teaspoon of lemon curd into the base of each pastry case – don't be tempted to add more, as it will bubble over during the cooking – then spoon a dessertspoon of the cream cheese mixture on top of this. Then, when all the mixture has been added, bake the tarts in two batches on the center shelf of the oven for about 20-25 minutes, by which time the mixture will have puffed up and turned a lovely golden brown. Now take them out of the oven and transfer them to a cooling rack. Don't worry if they start to sink a little. It's normal. If you like, you can give them a faint dusting of confectioners' sugar before serving.