

Salt and Serenity

Blackberry Meringue Tarts

Recipe adapted from Anna Olsen.

Makes eight 4-inch tarts or five 6-inch tarts.

Blackberry Filling:

330 grams (3 cups) fresh blackberries

98 grams (½ cup) granulated sugar

1 teaspoon rice wine vinegar

⅛ teaspoon kosher salt

14 grams (2 Tablespoons) corn starch

1 tsp vanilla extract

Pâte Sucrée Dough:

141 grams (½ cup + 2 Tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature

75 grams (6 Tablespoons) granulated sugar

1 large egg, at room temperature

½ tsp vanilla extract

236 grams (1¾ cups) all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon kosher salt

85 grams (½ cup) white chocolate, coarsely chopped

Swiss Meringue:

170 grams (¾ cup) egg whites, from 5 to 6 large eggs

255 grams (1¼ cups plus 1 tablespoon) granulated sugar

¼ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt; use half as much if iodized

¼ teaspoon cream of tartar

½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste

- 1. Make blackberry filling:** Place blackberries, sugar, vinegar and salt in a medium sized heavy bottom saucepan. Bring mixture to a simmer, stirring occasionally and simmer for about 5 minutes until the berries have softened and let out juices. Use a potato masher or spoon to crush the berries a little. Whisk the cornstarch with 2 Tablespoons of cool water and add this to the pot, returning it to a full simmer while stirring until thickened, about 2 minutes. Add vanilla, return to a simmer and then remove the pot from the heat. Cool the berries to room temperature and then chill the filling.
- 2. Make Pâte Sucrée Dough:** By hand, with electric beaters or a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar until fluffy. Add the egg and beat well, then add the vanilla.

3. Sift the flour and salt into the bowl and mix until the dough comes together (it will be soft). Divide dough in half and roll each half between 2 sheets of parchment paper, to a thickness of ¼ inch. Chill sheets of dough in fridge for at least 1 hour.
4. If you are using 4-inch tart shells, cut out eight 6-inch circles of dough (use a plate or bowl as a template). Line eight individual removable-bottom tart shells with the pastry and fold outer 1 inch of dough over, forming double-thick rim. Chill the shells for 20 minutes.
5. If you are using 6-inch tart shells, cut out five 8-inch circles of dough (use a plate or bowl as a template). Line five individual removable-bottom tart shells with the pastry and fold outer 1 inch of dough over, forming double-thick rim. Chill the shells for 20 minutes.
6. Preheat the oven to 350 °F. Place the chilled shells on a baking tray and dock the bottoms of the pastry with a fork. Bake the shells for about 20 minutes, until they brown just a little at the edges. Carefully lift one out of the shell to check to bottom crust. It should be golden brown. Bake a few more minutes if bottom crust is still pale. Cool the shells to room temperature.
7. Melt the white chocolate by placing it in a metal bowl resting over a pot of barely simmering water, stirring gently until melted. Use a pastry brush to brush a thin layer of the chocolate over the bottom of each cooled tart shell (this prevents the blackberry filling from seeping into the pastry shells and making them soggy). Chill the shells until ready to fill.
8. **Make Swiss Meringue:** Fill a wide pot with at least 2 inches of water. Place over high heat until steaming-hot, then adjust temperature to maintain a gentle simmer. Wipe the bowl and whisk attachment of your stand mixer with lemon juice or white vinegar to ensure they are totally clean and grease free. Rinse with hot water and dry well.
9. Combine egg whites, sugar, salt, cream of tartar, and vanilla bean paste in the just cleaned mixer bowl. Set bowl over steaming water, making sure water does not touch the bottom of the bowl. Stir and scrape sides of bowl constantly with a flexible spatula, until egg whites hold steady at 175°F, between 8 and 10 minutes. Transfer to a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment and whip at high speed until meringue is glossy and beginning to ball up inside the whisk, about 5 minutes.
10. Transfer meringue to a disposable piping bag fitted with a French star tip (Ateco #869 is a good size).
11. Fill tart shells with the blackberry filling. Pipe decorative stars onto each tart. If you happen to have a blowtorch, or [mini culinary torch](#) on hand, feel free to torch the meringue. Tarts will keep at room temperature, for about two days. Cover in an airtight container.

