

# SHORTBREAD AND FRUIT MINCE PIE

Recipe by Belinda Jeffrey



*This is rather like a giant mince pie, but so much easier to make. It tastes wonderful - crisp buttery shortbread encasing a lovely boozy fruit mince filling. Ideally the fruit mince would be homemade, but there is nothing wrong with using a good bought one - I often do.*

*And although the end result may not be look quite as whimsical as bite-sized mince pies, it does look very pretty and Christmassy with its lacy shortbread top and dusting of icing sugar.*

## INGREDIENTS

- ❖ 2 cups (300g) plain flour
- ❖ 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ❖ Pinch of salt
- ❖ 250g unsalted butter, at cool room temperature
- ❖ 1 cup (220g) caster sugar
- ❖ 2 egg yolks
- ❖ 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ❖ 1 cup (about 300g) fruit mince
- ❖ Icing sugar, for dusting



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## METHOD

- ❖ Put the flour, baking powder and salt into the bowl of a food processor and whiz them together so they're thoroughly mixed. Tip them into a bowl.
- ❖ Cut the butter into rough chunks and put it in the food processor along with the caster sugar. Whiz for about 40 seconds until the mixture is pale and creamy (you may need to stop the machine and scrape down the sides once or twice). Add the egg yolks and vanilla, then process again for 15 seconds or so until well combined.
- ❖ Now add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and pulse the machine in short bursts until a ball of dough forms around the blade (try not to over-do this mixing or the shortbread may be a bit tough).
- ❖ Turn the dough out onto a very lightly floured board and shape it into a log (if the dough seems too soft to do this, chill it for a little while first so it firms up enough to handle comfortably). Divide it in half and wrap each piece in plastic film. Put the dough logs in the fridge and chill them for at least 3 hours (or you can leave them overnight) until they are really firm.
- ❖ Preheat your oven to 180C and very lightly butter a 25cm loose-based tart tin. Remove one of the dough logs from the fridge.



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- ❖ Use the side of a box grater with the largest holes to grate the dough onto a plate. I tend to do this in batches as the grater fills quite quickly and the dough strands will squash if they become too compacted.
- ❖ As you finish each batch carefully transfer the grated dough to the prepared tin. When you have finished grating it, gently pat the dough strands out evenly over the base of the tin, trying not to squash them down too much.
- ❖ Now dollop the fruit mince evenly over the grated dough then smooth it out thinly as best you can with a palette knife, leaving a 1cm border all the way around the edges. Grate the remaining log of dough the same way as before and sprinkle it over the fruit mince. Give it the lightest pat down to even it out.
- ❖ Carefully transfer the tin to the oven (watch out you don't 'pop' the base up – I've been known to do this!) and bake the 'pie' for about 35 minutes, or until it's golden brown. Remove it from the oven and leave it to cool completely in the tin on a rack.
- ❖ To serve, gently remove the pie from the tin, dust it with icing sugar and cut it into wedges. It's lovely served simply with a spoonful of double thick cream or, to be really Christmassy, a little brandy or rum butter. Serves 8-12 depending on size.



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# MERINGUE ROULADE WITH MANGO AND PASSIONFRUIT

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This rather dreamy dessert is far easier to make than it may appear. It's wonderfully voluptuous to eat as the fluffy meringue and cream melt in your mouth whilst mango and passionfruit add a welcome sharpness and body. Nasturtium petals look gorgeous as a garnish, but they do need to be free of any chemical sprays.

Serves 8

## INGREDIENTS - TOPPING

- ❖ 2 ripe mangoes, very thinly sliced
- ❖ 4 passionfruit, halved, pulp scooped out
- ❖ Spray-free nasturtium or calendula petals, to garnish

## INGREDIENTS – PAVLOVA

- ❖ 6 egg whites (from 60g eggs), at room temperature
- ❖ 180g caster sugar
- ❖  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt
- ❖ 1 teaspoon caster sugar, extra, for sprinkling
- ❖ *Cream:*
- ❖ 300ml thickened cream or double thick cream, *softly* whipped
- ❖ 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons icing sugar mixture, sifted
- ❖ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract



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## METHOD

- ❖ Preheat your oven to 180C. Lightly butter a 34 x 24 x 2cm swiss roll tin or baking tray. Line the tin with lightly buttered baking paper, taking it up a few centimetres higher than the edges of the tin all the way around.
- ❖ To make the roulade, put the egg whites, caster sugar and salt into an electric mixer and beat them on medium-high for about 8 minutes, or until they're stiff and shiny. Scoop the resulting meringue into the prepared tin and spread it out evenly with a palette knife. Bake the meringue for 10-12 minutes, or until it's set and a pale-beige colour on top. Meanwhile, lay a large sheet of baking paper on your bench top and sprinkle it evenly with the extra teaspoon of caster sugar.
- ❖ When the meringue is ready, take it out of the oven. Now take your courage in both hands, and quickly but carefully invert the meringue onto the sugared baking paper. Carefully lift off the tin and very gently loosen the lining paper around the edges but leave it in place on the meringue.
- ❖ Now grasp both ends of one of the longest sides of the bottom layer of paper and gently roll the meringue onto itself, enclosing the lining paper. What you end up with is a long paper-covered cylinder. Carefully transfer it to a wire rack, seam-side down, and leave it to cool.



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- ❖ A couple of hours, before you're ready to serve it, gently unroll the meringue onto a large board and ease away the top layer of lining paper. There will probably be some splits in it but don't be daunted, the cream will glue it back together. Use paper towels to mop up any sugary syrup that has formed on or around the meringue.
- ❖ Put the cream, icing sugar, and vanilla into a chilled bowl and whip with an electric beater on medium speed, until thick but not grainy. Spread the cream evenly over the meringue, then cover this with a layer of mango slices, reserving a few for garnishing.
- ❖ Once again using the paper to help you, roll the meringue onto itself to form a log, like a swiss roll. Slide the roll onto a serving platter that will fit in the fridge. The easiest way I've found to do this is to shuffle the roulade to the edge of the board and then roll it onto the platter, making sure its seam side is down. If some of the paper ends up under the roulade, carefully wiggle it out. Don't worry if it loses its shape a bit, it's incredibly forgiving and you can use your hands to gently re-form it. Cover it loosely with a sheet of baking paper and return it to the fridge.
- ❖ When you're ready to serve the roulade, decorate it with the reserved mango slices and sprinkle with petals. As you slice it spoon a little passionfruit over each slice.
- ❖ (Although, I say to roll and fill the meringue ahead of time, it's fine to do it at the last minute.)



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