

LEMON MERINGUE TART



This Lemon Meringue Tart is a variation of our Lemon Chess Tart, a favorite we've been making at the café since day one. It evolved from a recipe I studied in a food history class on old English cuisine at the California Culinary Academy. Today, chess tarts are associated with Southern food.

This simple tart is made with eggs, sugar, lemon juice, melted butter, milk and cornmeal. It's rich in flavor, and the tartness of fresh lemon juice nicely balances the sweetness of sugar. Lavender meringue is my favorite topping for this tart. I hope you enjoy this tartly sweet spring recipe!

- Leslie Mackie

INGREDIENTS:

Makes one 10" tart

LEMON TART

- 2-1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons white cornmeal
- 1-1/2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 6 eggs
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated lemon zest
- 3/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 pre-baked (10-inch) Flaky Pie Dough tart shell

LAVENDER MERINGUE*

- 4 egg whites
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon dried lavender, ground
- 3/4 cup powdered sugar, sifted

DIRECTIONS:

MAKING THE TART

Prepare all of the ingredients and let them sit at room temperature for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 325°F

Sift sugar, cornmeal and flour into a large bowl. Crack the eggs into the sugar mixture one at a time, whisking between each addition. Continue whisking as you add the lemon zest, lemon juice, milk, and melted butter, making sure each ingredient is thoroughly incorporated before adding another.

Make sure that your pre-baked tart shell is not cracked, then place it on a rimmed baking sheet. Pour the filling into the shell, until it reaches just below the top. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, until the center is set and the surface is golden brown. Check the tart after the first 15 minutes of baking to make sure it is browning evenly. If one side of the tart is browning more quickly than the other, carefully rotate the baking sheet to even out the baking.

Let the tart cool on a wire rack for at least 1 hour. While the tart is cooling, prepare the lavender meringue.

MAKING THE LAVENDER MERINGUE

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, add the egg whites. As you whip, add in the cream of tartar and 1 tablespoon of the sugar. When soft peaks form, add the remaining sugar and dried lavender. Continue whipping until stiff peaks form. Remove bowl from the mixer and fold in the powdered sugar with a rubber spatula. Use an offset spatula to spread the meringue in a wavy circular design on top of the tart. With a blow torch (the most fun pastry accessory) carefully brown the top. Decorate with lavender sprigs or candied lemon rind. Enjoy!

*If you are short on time or prefer a simpler finish, make a slightly sweetened whipped cream by combining 1 cup heavy cream, 2 tablespoons of sugar, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract and whisking until the cream holds its shape.