

Christmas cooking

mince pies

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without homemade mince pies.

Ingredients

- unsalted butter , for greasing
- 375 g shortcrust pastry
- plain flour , for dusting
- 200 g quality mincemeat (*viande hachée de qualité*)
- 1 splash of brandy, sherry or orange juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ an eating apple
- 2 balls of stem ginger
- 50 g dried apricots
- 75 g dried cranberries
- 1-2 pinches of mixed spice
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon semi-skimmed milk
- icing sugar , for dusting



Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4, and lightly grease a shallow cupcake tray with butter.

Roll out half the pastry on a clean flour-dusted surface to 3mm thick, then cut out 12 circles using a pastry cutter or a clean glass tumbler. Lay them in the hollows of the tray and place in the fridge to chill for 30 minutes.

Spoon the mincemeat into a mixing bowl, breaking it up with a spoon as you go, then pour in the brandy.

Peel the apple and chop into small chunks, then finely chop the ginger and apricots and stir it all to the mincemeat with the cranberries and mixed spice.

Roll out the remaining pastry to the same thickness, then using a smaller cutter or tumbler, cut out another 12 circles - these will be the lids for your pies.

Knead the pastry trimmings together briefly, roll out and cut into shapes to decorate the tops of your pies (stars and tree-shapes work well).

Take the pastry bases out of the fridge and fill them just over halfway up with mincemeat, then smooth the filling out to the edges. Beat the egg and milk together, then brush over the top edges of the pastry.

Lay the lids over the top, then crimp the edges together with your thumb and forefinger so the lids stick to the bases. Top each pie with a cut-out shape, then brush once more with the eggwash.

Bake for 25 minutes, or until golden. Dust with icing sugar before serving, then dig in.

Take the pastry bases out of the fridge and fill them just over halfway up with mincemeat, then smooth the filling out to the edges. Beat the egg and milk together, then brush over the top edges of the pastry.

Lay the lids over the top, then crimp the edges together with your thumb and forefinger so the lids stick to the bases. Top each pie with a cut-out shape, then brush once more with the egg wash.

Bake in the hot oven for around 25 minutes, or until the pastry is cooked through and golden on top. Dust with icing sugar before serving, then dig in.

Tips

Adding a little sprinkling of ground cinnamon in with the icing sugar before dusting is super delicious, too.