

ASPARAGUS, CHEESE AND HONEY TART



Ingredients

- 320g ready-rolled puff pastry (or homemade rough puff pastry)
- About 16 spears of asparagus, trimmed
- 125g of your favourite cheese, such as brie, camembert, reblochon, or similar
- 1 egg, beaten
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper

For your own rough puff pastry

Ingredients

- 250g plain flour
- 250g cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2 cm cubes
- A pinch of salt
- 125ml cold water
- 1 tsp of white wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar

It doesn't get simpler than this. I love making my own pastry, but I'm also a big fan of using a pre-made one when I'm short on time. Use whatever cheese you like, even cheddar or mozzarella works if you're not keen on the stronger types. When asparagus isn't in season, swap it for tenderstem broccoli. I sometimes make individual tarts by cutting the pastry into four equal rectangles at the beginning and then continuing with the method below.

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Lay the puff pastry out on a baking tray. Working quickly to keep it cold, score a border about 1cm from the edges all around the pastry making sure not to cut all the way through. This will form the rim of the tart once cooked.
3. Brush the egg wash over the entire body and edges of the pastry.
4. Trim the asparagus so it's roughly the same width as the pastry. Toss in a little olive oil and salt, then lay the spears side by side inside the border.
5. Slice the cheese as thinly as possible and lay it over the asparagus. Season generously with black pepper, then place in the hot oven and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until puffed and golden.
6. Serve immediately with a drizzle of honey and a green salad on the side.

For your own rough puff pastry

1. Sift the flour onto a clean surface or into a large bowl. Add the cold butter and salt, then use your fingertips to rub them together until it looks like coarse crumbs.
2. Gradually add the water and vinegar, about 50ml at a time, mixing gently until all the liquid is incorporated. The dough won't be perfectly smooth, but that's fine. Roughly shape it into a ball, cover with cling film, and chill for 20 minutes. Trust the process here!
3. Lightly flour your surface and roughly roll the dough into a rectangle, about 40cm x 20cm. Fold it into thirds like a letter, then rotate it 90 degrees. Roll it out again to the same size and fold into thirds once more. Cover and chill for 20 minutes. Repeat this process twice more, turning the folded dough 90 degrees each time.
4. Chill the pastry for at least an hour, overnight if possible, or freeze it for later use.
5. Once ready to use, roll it out on a lightly floured surface to a rough rectangle, about 30 x 20cm and 1cm thick. Or cut into four rectangles for individual portions, then continue as above.