

CHOCOLATE BERRY FRUIT TART WITH VANILLA CRÈME ANGLAIS (this makes two 8" inch tarts)

INGREDIENTS

For the Chocolate Base

4 1/2 ounces high-quality bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
9 tablespoons (1 stick plus 1 tablespoon) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup confectioners' sugar
6 large eggs, separated, at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 cup all-purpose flour

For the Crème Anglaise

1/2 cup whole milk
1/2 cup whipping cream
1 vanilla bean, split
3 large egg yolks
3 tablespoons sugar

For the Berries

3-4 pints of assorted fresh berries, in this case, raspberry and blueberry
confectioners sugar, for dusting (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400F. Prepare two 8 inch tart pans with cooking spray.

In the top part of a double boiler over very hot, but not simmering, water, or in a microwave at medium power, melt the chocolate. Remove from the heat or the oven, and let stand, stirring often, until cool.

Beat the butter in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle blade on medium-high speed until smooth, about 1 minute. On low speed, beat in the confectioners' sugar. Return the speed to medium-high and beat until light in color and texture, about 2 minutes. Beat in the egg yolks, one at a time, scraping down the sides of the bowl. Beat in the chocolate and vanilla.

Beat the egg whites and granulated sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer on high speed just until they form soft, shiny peaks. Do not overbeat. Stir about one fourth of the beaten whites into the chocolate mixture to lighten it, then fold in the remaining whites, leaving a few visible wisps of whites. Sift half of the flour over the chocolate mixture, and fold in with a rubber spatula. Repeat with the remaining flour.

Fill the tart pans three-quarters full, being careful not to overfill. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, about 30-32 minutes. Cool the tarts in the pan for 15 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

In the meantime, make your crème anglaise. Combine milk and cream in heavy medium saucepan. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean; add bean. Bring milk mixture to simmer. Remove from heat.

Whisk egg yolks and sugar in medium bowl to blend. Gradually whisk hot milk mixture into yolk mixture. Return custard to saucepan. Stir over low heat until custard thickens and leaves path on back of spoon when finger is drawn across, about 5 minutes (do not boil). Cover and chill.

To assemble, spread a liberal amount of the crème anglaise over the tart, leaving a 1/2 inch rim around the edge. Arrange berries on the tart (I usually do a "rim" of raspberries around the edge of the crème anglaise, and then arrange the rest in the middle). Chill for an hour or so before serving to let the berries.