

Regal Raspberry Tart

Raspberries have been calling me as I peruse the fruit section of the market. A raspberry tart is a versatile dessert with a buttery pastry crust, creamy filling, and fresh raspberries. Unlike a pie, the sides of tarts are commonly shallow, and they are never made with a layer of pastry on top.

A fluted tart pan with a removable bottom makes releasing and filling this tart a much easier process. The fluted edges look elegant, while the removable bottom makes it easy to transfer to the cutting board or platter for slicing.

The foundation of a delicious raspberry tart is the crust. It sets the stage for the flavors and textures to follow. Traditionally, tart crusts are made from sweet shortbread pastry dough. Tart crust is called *pâte sucrée*. The tart crust is a crumbly crust that works well for a cream and fruit pastry. Generally, the main difference in ingredients is eggs. The eggs give the crust a more “cookie” type texture.

To create a *pâte sucrée*, mix cold, diced butter with dry ingredients until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. The addition of almond flour can enhance the flavor and texture. Add a beaten egg and mix until the dough starts to come together.

Precision in mixing is crucial to avoid developing too much gluten, which can lead to a tough crust. Roll the dough out between two sheets of parchment paper to prevent sticking and make the transfer to the tart pan easier.

Some tarts are completely blind-baked, and a filling is added and served. Other tarts are partially baked and afterward rebaked with a filling added. The oven should be fully preheated before the pastry is baked. To prevent a soggy bottom, assemble the tart close to when you plan to serve it.

For me, it is fun to change up the filling.

1. Pastry Cream: Basic vanilla pastry cream, the traditional filling for any variety of fruit tart, accentuates the delicate raspberry flavor. Almond cream is also wonderful.
2. Chocolate: A layer of chocolate ganache elevates a raspberry tart to another level of decadence. Mix equal parts melted chocolate and heavy cream until smooth, then pour the ganache into the baked tart shell and let it cool before adding the fresh raspberry topping.

3. Lemon: Use a layer of lemon curd to add brightness and a zing of tangy flavor.
4. Mixed Fruit: Fresh raspberries pair well with other seasonal fruits, like blueberries and strawberries. Decorate the tart with a mix of different berries or sliced fruits.

It's best to make the pastry cream a minimum of four hours ahead or the day before and keep it in the fridge to let its texture thicken and flavor deepen overnight.

The star of the tart is undoubtedly the raspberries. Look for bright, plump berries that are free from mold. The fruit should be fragrant and firm to the touch.

Assembling a raspberry tart involves careful layering of ingredients, followed by adding decorative elements to enhance its visual appeal and taste. Spread the cold filling over the cooled pre-baked crust and top with raspberries to assemble the tart. Arrange the fresh raspberries against each other on top of the filling to form a neat layer covering the entire surface. You can glaze the top if you like, but that's optional. If desired, dust the border with powdered sugar before serving. A finished raspberry tart should feature a harmony of colors and textures, creating an indulgent dessert that appeals to both the palate and the eye.

Packed with fresh raspberries, this dessert is simply bursting with flavors!

(Sources: bakealish.com; www.masterclass.com; www.onceuponachef.com; snaped.fns.usda.gov)