

The Coronation Quiche

Serves 8-16

Ingredients

For the pastry (23cm tart tin):

- 125g Butter, cold
- 220g Plain flour
- ¼ tsp Fine salt
- 1 Egg yolk (medium egg - reserve the egg white)
- 5tsp Chilled water (you may need more or less than this)

For the filling:

- 200ml Single cream
- 200ml Double cream
- 4 Eggs (medium)
- 1 tbsp Tarragon, chopped, fresh
- ½-1 tsp Fine salt
- ¼ tsp Ground black pepper
- 125g Extra mature cheddar cheese, grated
- 400g Fresh spinach, cooked, squeezed and chopped / 200g-250g frozen leaf spinach, defrosted, squeezed & chopped
- 100g Frozen broad beans, defrosted and de-skinned



Method

To make the pastry:

Place the flour, salt and butter in a food processor and pulse until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Mix the egg yolk with the water and gradually add to the pastry mixture, pulsing until it resembles small pebbles. Check the consistency of the dough by pressing a little between your fingers; it should feel smooth and pliable and not dry. If it feels dry (it may have a slightly sandy texture), pulse in a little more water, ½ tsp at a time. Once it feels smooth and pliable, continue pulsing until the mixture comes together to form a dough.

At this stage, you can form the dough into a disc, wrap in cling film and rest in the fridge for 20-30 minutes, (or, if you feel confident, skip this step, roll out your dough and line your tart tin, then chill for at least one hour).

On a lightly floured work surface, roll your pastry to the thickness of about 4mm. Using your rolling pin to lift it, carefully place the pastry in your 23cm fluted, loose-bottomed tart tin and press the pastry into the base, pressing into the flutes of the tin. Trim off the excess pastry with scissors, leaving a little overhanging the edge to allow for shrinkage and prick the base of the tart all over with a fork. Put in the fridge to rest for at least one hour.

To make the filling:

While the pastry is resting, make the filling.

Cook the spinach, cool and squeeze out as much excess liquid as possible, first using your hands, and then placing the spinach in a clean cloth and squeezing until you can't get any more water out. You will be left with a fairly solid lump of spinach; place this on a chopping board and chop roughly into smallish chunks. Set aside.

Place the broad beans in a bowl and pour over freshly boiled water to defrost. Leave for a few minutes, then drain and refresh under cold water. Remove the skins by squeezing each bean gently until the bright green kernal pops out. Set aside.

Grate the cheese.

Remove the tarragon leaves from the stem and finely chop. Set aside.

Whisk the eggs well, then whisk in the creams and season well. Add half the tarragon and whisk to combine. Set aside.

To blind bake the pastry case:

Preheat the oven to 190C (fan oven) / 200C (non fan oven). Place the rested, chilled pastry case on a baking sheet and line with baking parchment or tin foil and fill with baking beans (or similar – see tips), pressing down to ensure that they fully cover the base and support the sides of the pastry. Bake for 20-25 minutes, then carefully remove the baking beans and paper. Check that the sides of the pastry case are fully cooked and set (the base will still be a little raw, but if the side of the pastry isn't fully cooked, replace the baking beans and cook for a further 5-10 minutes until done). Once the sides are fully cooked, remove the baking beans and cook the empty pastry case for a further 10-15 minutes until the base is cooked through. Whisk the left-over egg white and brush over the interior of the pastry case and cook for 5 minutes until the egg is set – this step is optional but will add a waterproof layer to the pastry.

To fill & cook the quiche:

Reduce the oven to 170C (fan oven) / 180C (non fan oven).

Scatter half the cheese over the base of the tart case. Scatter over the spinach, then add the broad beans and finally sprinkle over the remaining tarragon.

Check the egg and cream mixture for seasoning – it should taste over-seasoned and you should be able to taste the salt. Give it a whisk, then carefully pour into the tart shell. Gently give the mixture a stir to ensure the filling is evenly dispersed and push any beans or spinach poking out under the egg mixture so that they don't burn. Scatter over the remaining cheese.

Place the quiche in the oven and bake for 25-30 minutes until set and lightly golden – it should be cooked with a slight wobble in the centre. (You may need to turn the quiche halfway through cooking if your oven has a hot spot to ensure even browning).

Remove from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool. Using a sharp knife, carefully cut the excess pastry down to the edges of the tin and remove.

Leave the quiche to cool in the tin for 20-30 minutes - this will set the filling and allow the pastry to firm up. If you don't do this, your quiche will be at risk of collapsing!

To remove the quiche from the tin, place an upturned glass or small bowl on your work surface. Place the tart on the centre and carefully pull the fluted rim down to remove it. Use a palette knife to release the base of the quiche and carefully place on a serving plate.

To reheat the quiche:

You can serve the quiche at room temperature, cold, or reheated. To reheat, bring the quiche to room temperature and place the on a baking sheet. Heat the oven to 180C and heat the quiche for 10-15 minutes until piping hot.

Forkful's Top Tips to make your Coronation Quiche perfect:

THE PASTRY:

Great shortcrust pastry should be crisp and crumbly in texture. This is achieved by using a high solid fat to flour ratio, by adding the minimum amount of liquid to bind the ingredients together, and by handling the pastry dough as little as possible. (You want to keep your pastry "short" by preventing the formation of gluten. Gluten is created when water is mixed with flour, and forms into long chains or threads, and the stretchy gluten is further developed when the dough is manipulated - think kneading bread dough).

So the key to a good, tender and crumbly "short" pastry is minimal liquid and minimal handling which is very easy using a food processor. However, it is important to have *enough* liquid to make your pastry pliable and easy to handle. A dry pastry will be difficult to roll out and will likely crack when cooked. Thankfully, it's easy to check you've got the right consistency. Pulse the butter and flour together until it resembles fine breadcrumbs, then add your liquid and pulse until it resembles small pebbles. Take a little of this mixture and press together - if it is smooth and pliable, continue pulsing until it forms a dough. If it feels a little dry, add a little more water, ½ a teaspoon at a time until you've got it right.

I find that if I've got the pastry just right, I can roll it out straight away and line my tart tin, without needing to rest it in the fridge first. I also trim the over-hanging pastry at this stage by gently rolling a rolling pin over the rim of the tart tin which will cut the excess pastry off and leave you with a neat edge. Pricking the base of the pastry all over with a fork at this stage which will prevent it ballooning up when cooked. If you skip resting the pastry before rolling it, it is essential to chill the lined tart tin for at least a couple of hours or even overnight before blind baking it.

Don't throw the pastry off cuts away! If your pastry does crack when you blind bake it, you can use the left-over pastry to do a patch up job.

Blind Baking:

There are 2 stages to blind baking your pastry case and it is essential that pastry is well chilled, otherwise the butter will melt before the structure is set and the pastry shell will collapse.

First, you need to line the pastry with baking parchment and fill with baking beans (or uncooked rice, beans, lentils, sugar, or even old coins) and cook for 15-20 minutes. This will cook and set the sides of the tart case and ensure it maintains its shape.

Next, you need to remove the baking beans and bake the tart for a further 10 minutes which will cook the base of the tart and ensure no soggy bottom! (For added security, brush the left-over egg white over the base of the pastry and cook for a further 5 minutes to seal it). If you have any cracks in the cooked pastry, carefully press bits of your left-over uncooked pastry to cover them up - no need to cook again as the raw pastry will cook when you bake the filled quiche.

THE FILLING:

Spinach:

An easy way to cook the spinach (if ready washed) is to pierce the bag a few times and zap it in the microwave. Cook it on high for a minute, check for doneness and continue to cook for another minute until done - mine took about 3 minutes. Alternatively, you can empty the spinach into a colander and pour over a kettle of boiling water.

You need to dry your spinach really, really well! Once it's cooked, cool it a little then squeeze it with your hands to get rid of as much water as you can. Once you've done this, put it in a clean t-towel or J-cloth and squeeze again until you can't get any more liquid out of it. You'll be left with a fraction of the volume of the uncooked spinach and it will form a fairly solid lump. Put your lump on a board and chop roughly. (You can do this a couple of days in advance).

Broad Beans:

Broad beans are just coming into season, but even if you can find fresh, I'd advise using frozen beans which are smaller and sweeter. Whatever you use, you'll need to remove the silver-grey casing on the beans which can be tough and bitter – this is a little time-consuming so worth doing in advance. To cook the beans, simply place them in a bowl and cover in freshly boiled water to defrost. Leave for a few minutes, then drain and refresh under cold water.

To remove the skins, pinch the between your fingers until the bright green kernal pops out. I reckon the skins account for about 25% of the total weight of the bean, so you'd need about 100g of frozen beans to achieve 75g once skinned. (You can do this a couple of days in advance).

Cheddar Cheese:

I'd advise using the strongest cheese you can get your hands on and have suggested extra mature cheddar. You can grate the cheese any way you want, but a quick and easy way is to cut it into cubes and whizz in a food processor until it forms a crumb-like texture – but be careful not to take it too far as it will clump if over-processed. (You can do this a couple of days in advance).

The Custard Filling:

It's essential to season any egg-based recipe such as a quiche or soufflé really well. This is because as the eggs rise and expand, the flavour will be diluted. So you need to be pretty heavy-handed with the salt - your uncooked custard should taste distinctly salted before you cook it, otherwise the finished product risks being bland.

SUBSTITUTIONS:

If you can't find **broad beans**, you can use edamame beans which is the substitution suggested in the original recipe. However, I think frozen peas or petits pois would also work well and a mix of peas and edamame would be delicious.

If fresh **tarragon** is nowhere to be found, use 1 tsp of dried tarragon instead. Failing that, a mix of chopped dill and flat leaf parsley would taste great too.

You can use **frozen leaf spinach** instead of fresh, in which case, defrost it and squeeze out the water as per the instructions above.