



Plum Chestnut Tartlets

MAKES TWELVE 3-INCH TARTLETS



Unlike butter pastry, this dough is unfussy and easy to handle. Fill these tasty tartlets with plums and grapes, bake until soft and jammy, and finish with a dollop of *crème fraîche* (page 54) for a scrumptious, elegant dessert. Special equipment: a dozen mini brioche tartlet tins.

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. To make the dough, pulse the chestnut and buckwheat flours, arrowroot, flaxseed, and nutmeg in a food processor. Add the hot sweet potato (the heat is essential to tenderize and moisten the dough), date paste, and vanilla. Run the processor for 1 to 2 minutes until the dough gathers into a soft, pliant ball. If it fails to gather because the mix is too dry, add more sweet potato pulp. If too wet, add a bit more buckwheat flour.
3. Divide the dough in 12 equal pieces. Cover it well with plastic wrap and a kitchen towel to keep it moist and warm.
4. Lightly dust the board with chestnut flour. Remove one piece of dough, and roll it into a 4-inch round about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick. Place it in a mini tartlet tin, pressing it to conform to the shape and extend higher than the tin, making it is easy to pluck out later. Spritz very lightly with water, and cover with plastic wrap. Repeat with the remaining balls of dough and tins.
5. Remove the plastic wrap from each tin, and drape 4 to 6 plum slices over each pastry cup, skin side up, so they resemble a flower or star. Fill in gaps between the plum slices and the center of the tart with the sliced grapes.
6. Place the tins on a baking sheet, and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, checking on them at 30 minutes. The tartlets are done when their crust is golden and the fruit is easy to pierce with a knife.
7. Remove from the oven and allow the fruit juices to set as the tartlets cool. Then wiggle each crust around to free it from its tin. Using a pastry brush, glaze the fruit and dough rim with the apple glaze. Serve warm, topped with vegan *crème fraîche*.

PREP: about 20 minutes

BAKE: 35 to 40 minutes

DOUGH

1 cup chestnut flour, plus more for dusting

1 cup buckwheat flour, plus more if needed

3 tablespoons arrowroot powder

3 tablespoons freshly ground golden flaxseeds

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

1 cup hot sweet potato pulp, plus more if needed, microwaved for a few minutes until soft

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Date Paste (page 42), made from $\frac{1}{3}$ cup pitted dates

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

FILLING AND FINISHING

8 red or black plums, cut in half, pitted, and sliced $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick

1 bunch seedless red or black grapes, cut in quarters

1 cup Apple Glaze (page 45)

1 cup Vegan Crème Fraîche (page 54)



Dried Fruit Paste

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP



Dried fruits, simply reconstituted with water and puréed, make a fabulous alternative to refined sweeteners. Use them in doughs for cookies, sweet breads, tarts, and pies, atop Roasted Plum Crostini (page 215), or even smeared over yogurt cream cheese or Soy Chèvre (page 54 or 66). Mix contrasting flavors, like sweet-sour by adding tamarind pulp, vinegars, or citrus; or sweet-spicy ones by adding chilies.

Dates are the sweetest, with Medjools leading the pack with their butterscotch and vanilla flavor notes, but don't neglect dried figs, plums, apricots, and mangoes, or tart cranberries and sour cherries. Each fruit paste lends flavor and luscious texture to any sweet treat.

PREP: 5 minutes

COOK: 5 minutes

1½ cups dried fruit, pits,
if any, removed

1. In a saucepan, cover the dried fruit with water. Bring to simmer over medium heat and cook for 5 minutes. Alternatively, cover with water in a microwave-safe bowl and heat for 2 minutes on high power. Let cool in the soaking liquid.
2. Transfer the rehydrated fruit to a high-speed blender. Add as little or much of the soaking water as needed: less for a dense paste or more for a softer, looser texture. Blend until very smooth. Fruit paste will keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, and in the freezer for 3 months.



Fruit Glazes and Vinegar Reductions



MAKES ½ TO ¾ CUP, DEPENDING ON DENSITY

cook: about 20 minutes for a defrosted concentrate or 1 hour for juice or vinegar

12 ounces 100% juice concentrate

OR

3 cups 100% fruit juice

OR

3 cups red or white balsamic vinegar

Fruit glazes are simple reductions of common fruit juice concentrates like apple, orange, or grape, thin enough to glaze pastries and baked fruits and vegetables in lieu of egg washes or oils. With a few repeated applications, they lend appealing color, sheen, and a touch of sweetness to pastry crusts. With their antioxidants and phytonutrients, fruit and vinegar reductions make healthy alternatives to other refined sugars to serve on griddle cakes and waffles. Spooned, smeared, or squeezed from a bottle, they are a decorative medium to create attractive plating designs.

Juices that are not concentrated, like cherry or pomegranate, can become glazes too; they just take longer to boil down. White and red balsamic vinegar reductions make delicious glazes, too, but open windows when you boil them, as their vapors are intense!

1. Pour the juice or vinegar into a heavy-bottomed saucepan and heat over medium, stirring occasionally. As the water in the liquid evaporates, the juice or vinegar will thicken. Lower the heat and monitor as the reduction nears the density you need for your dish.
2. For dressings and glazes, reduce the juice or vinegar until it is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, bearing in mind that it will continue to thicken a little as it cools.
3. For piping and plating and applications that require a denser consistency, simmer the liquid longer and test its consistency periodically.
4. If the reduction becomes too thick for your intended use, simply thin with water, adding a spoonful at a time. Fruit glazes will keep in the fridge for 3 weeks or can be frozen for 3 months.



Vegan Greek-Style Yogurt

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS



Cultured with a broad blend of lactobacilli, soy milk is transformed into a live probiotic yogurt through the process of fermentation, and it is absolutely delicious. It is irresistible mixed with fresh fruits or vegetables, and provides a base for dressings, dips, and sauces. Use Solgar Advanced 40+ acidophilus and Rite Aid Maximum Strength Probiotic for their thick and creamy results. Special equipment: a candy thermometer and heat source like a warming drawer, yogurt maker, Instant Pot, or dehydrator.

PREP: 30 minutes plus 8 hours to culture

1 quart homemade or organic unsweetened soy milk with no additives, like Westsoy or Edensoy.

2 capsules Solgar Advanced 40+ (see left)

2 capsules Rite Aid Maximum Strength Probiotic (see left)

1. In a saucepan, heat the soy milk over medium heat to 108°F on a candy thermometer. Stir in the four capsules until dissolved. Transfer the mixture to clean lidded containers or jars and cover.
2. Set your heat source to 100°F, add the containers, and culture for 8 hours. Over this time, the bacteria will proliferate, thickening and flavoring the yogurt. Retighten the lids and transfer to the refrigerator. The yogurt will keep for several weeks.

VARIATIONS

CRÈME FRAÎCHE AND SOFT CHEESES: Spread a square of muslin over a large strainer or colander and spoon in the yogurt. Tie up the corners of the muslin with kitchen twine to create a ball and hang it over a bowl to drip, thicken, and continue to ferment for the length of time listed below before using or storing in the fridge.

2 hours for crème fraîche

3 hours for Icelandic skyr

4 hours for cream cheese

6 to 8 hours in the fridge for thick plain labneh and colorful süzme (see below)

SÜZME: Shape the soft cheese into bite-size balls or oblongs, and roll in any or all of these traditional toppings: crushed Aleppo pepper; za'atar; roasted, peeled, and chopped pistachios; ground sumac berries; fresh chopped herbs like dill, parsley, or mint; toasted sesame seeds; and toasted pine nuts.



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Cathy Katin-Grazzini

Photography by Giordano Katin-Grazzini

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