

# A DAY IN *HONG KONG*



A Cantonese  
Cookbook



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# DAAN TAAT

## EGG TARTS

Egg tarts are a Western-influenced Cantonese dessert, which was first introduced into Hong Kong in the 1940s by chefs from Guangzhou, in southern China. Unlike the English or Portuguese custard tarts, this Cantonese pastry is traditionally made with lard rather than butter. The tart is filled with a soft, rich egg custard and can be made with two types of crusts: a flaky puff pastry crust or shortcrust pastry. The shortcrust is a little easier to make, so that's what I've done here, but each version has its own group of fans.

### MAKES 16

- 75 g (2¾ oz) caster (superfine) sugar
- 250 ml (1 cup) hot water
- 3 large eggs (and by this I mean 70 g/2½ oz eggs), at room temperature
- 125 ml (½ cup) evaporated milk
- ½ teaspoon natural vanilla extract

### Shortcrust pastry

- 60 g (2 oz) icing (confectioners') sugar
- 135 g (5 oz) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 15 g (½ oz) beaten egg
- 200 g (1½ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra for dusting
- 2½ tablespoons milk powder

- 1 Lightly grease sixteen 5 cm (2 in) round tart tins.
- 2 To make the pastry, place the icing sugar and butter in a mixing bowl. Using your fingertips, rub the sugar into the butter. Work in the egg, followed by the flour and milk powder until the mixture is just combined (try not to overwork the dough). Wrap in plastic wrap and rest for 5 minutes in the fridge.
- 3 Roll out the dough into a cylinder shape on a lightly floured surface. Divide the dough into sixteen pieces (about 25 g/1 oz per piece), roll each piece into a ball and gently press out into 7 cm (2¾ in) rounds. Press the rounds into the prepared tins, pushing the dough slightly higher than the top edge. Place the tins on a tray, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
- 4 Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F).
- 5 Place the sugar in a heatproof bowl, add the hot water and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Set aside to cool completely. In a separate bowl, lightly whisk the eggs, evaporated milk and vanilla – you just want to loosen the egg here so don't whisk too vigorously. Pour in the cooled sugar mixture and stir to combine, then gently strain through a fine sieve to get rid of any air bubbles.
- 6 Pour the custard into the tart shells until they are four-fifths full. Immediately place the tarts in the lower part of the oven (to help the pastry and custard cook at the same time) and bake for 15 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 180°C (350°F) and cook for another 5–10 minutes, until the filling is just set. Serve warm.
- 7 The tarts are best eaten on the day they're made, but can be stored in an airtight container and eaten the next day.