

# Simple Fruit Tart

Makes one 9-inch tart

I love this basic, elegant, classy tart. It's reserved and restrained, it's prim and proper, it's creamy and delicious. It's also one of the more flexible desserts in this book, and if you're the type of baker who loves to arrange your fruit like a gorgeous mosaic, well, this recipe is for you. Three distinct components, comprising an easy shortbread-like press-in crust, silky vanilla custard, and whatever fruit strikes you as most lovely when it comes time to make this tart. Since the crust and custard already give you something so fantastic, whatever you choose to top it with is truly a cherry on top, no pun intended (unless you're using cherries, then definitely pun intended).

## Ingredients

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### For the Crust

1 cups/200g all-purpose flour  
1 cup/80g powdered sugar  
1½ teaspoons/6g kosher salt  
1½ sticks/6 ounces/170g unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly

### For Assembly

Vanilla Pastry Cream, cooled

½ pound/225g assorted fresh red fruits (raspberries, strawberries, currants, boysenberries), halved or sliced according to shape and size, OR any assortment of delicious, roasted fruits

## Instructions

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- 1 Make the crust:** Preheat the oven to 350°F
- In a medium bowl, combine the flour, powdered sugar, and salt. Using your fingers, incorporate the melted butter until you've got a crumbly, Play-Doh-like textured dough. Resist the urge to knead the dough, as you don't want to develop any gluten (that's how the crust shrinks on you).
- Press the dough into a 9-inch tart pan with a removable bottom or a 9-inch springform pan and use the tines of a fork or the tip of a knife to lightly prick the top all over (to allow steam to escape as it bakes).
- Bake until the bottom of the crust is golden brown, and the edges are the color of a nicely golden shortbread cookie, 18–20 minutes (this tart does not get baked again, so this is your chance to fully bake through). Remove from the oven and let cool completely.
- 5 Assemble the tart:** Once the tart shell is cooled, whisk the vanilla pastry cream until it's totally smooth (it will look firm, lumpy, and cottage cheese-like until it smooths out and comes together, looking like the gorgeous, smooth pudding it once was). Spread this into the tart shell.
- Top with fruit of your choosing, but for the simplest version, use lovely, uncooked berries, preferably all from the same color family. Strawberries thinly sliced crosswise to expose their circular core, raspberries either left whole or cut in half, red currants if you can find them, you get the idea.
- Refrigerate for 1 hour or so to set and chill before slicing.

**DO AHEAD:** The shortbread crust can be baked 2 days ahead, stored wrapped at room temperature. The tart itself can be made 2 days ahead but can get a little soggy after that. Store it wrapped and refrigerated. Serve chilled.

**EAT WITH:** A hunk of salty cheese and sliced cured meats on a lovely little picnic.