

SUPERSTABILIZED WHIPPED CREAM
Submitted by Linda Perkins

Makes 2 Cups

1/2 to 1 teaspoon powdered gelatin (I use 1 tsp Knox original)
1 Tbsp water
1 cup of heavy cream
1 Tablespoon of sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Refrigerate the mixing bowl and beater for at least 15 minutes.

In a small heatproof measuring cup place gelatin and water. Allow to soften 5 minutes. Set cup in a pan of simmering water and stir occasionally until gelatin is dissolved. (Alternately use the microwave on high power for about 10 seconds or so and stir.) Remove cup and cool a little bit. Gelatin must be warm when added to cream or it will clump up.

In the chilled bowl beat the cream and sugar just until traces of beater marks begin to show distinctly. Add the warm gelatin mixture in a slow steady stream, beating constantly. Add vanilla and beat just until stiff peaks form when beater is raised. Watch the cream because it is easy to beat it too far and get buttery glop. I will often take it off the mixer and finish the very last part with a whisk so I have more control.

FRESH FRUIT TART GLAZE
Submitted by Linda Perkins

1/2 cup concentrated fruit juice, fruit syrup or poaching liquid
2 tsp tapioca flour

Bring mixture to a boil for about 15 seconds on the stove or in the microwave and whisk until smooth. Cool to room temperature and brush over fruit. Choose a fruit juice that complements your tart's fresh fruit. Frozen concentrated fruit juice works well, thawed and undiluted.

An alternate glaze method is to warm some fruit jam and dilute it with a little water, allow this to cool and brush it on the fruit. Apricot jam glaze is delicious on a fresh strawberry tart. The tapioca flour glaze looks prettiest on a tart the longest, though. That's if you have the kind of family that lets a strawberry tart sit around in the fridge for 4 days. As if.

FRESH STRAWBERRY TART
Submitted by Linda Perkins

1) Bake and cool a SWEET COOKIE TART CRUST in a 9 or 10 inch tart pan. You can just press the dough into the pan, you don't have to roll it out.

2) You can fill the tart almost full with either pastry cream or you can mix PASTRY CREAM and SUPERSTABILIZED WHIPPED CREAM together to make a fluffier tart. To do that mix together approximately equal parts pastry cream and SUPERSTABILIZED WHIPPED CREAM (just eyeball it). Begin by folding 1/4 of the whipped cream into the pastry cream. Then fold the remaining 3/4ths in, taking care to fold slowly so the mixture doesn't deflate. Then fill the tart with the mixture.

3) Arrange clean dry strawberries on the top of the pastry cream. Remove the hull but keep the strawberries whole. This way they don't weep and make the tart sloppy. Place the strawberries top side down on the pastry cream until the whole tart is covered.

4) Brush the strawberries with apricot glaze. Store tart in the refrigerator up to 3 days.

You can cut the strawberries and/or combine them with other fruit but cut fresh fruit tarts don't stay pretty as long as whole fresh fruit tarts. And just so you know, some fruits don't work very well with pastry cream because they have protein-dissolving enzymes. Examples are fresh pineapple, kiwi, mango and papaya. You can make them work but you should not expect to be able to keep those fruits on a tart overnight.