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beetroot tart with horseradish cream recipe

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One of my favourite tarts with a sweet-savoury flavour, this looks great with a purple beetroot, and even better if you can find golden beetroot to alternate in stripes in the filling. The horseradish cream gives some added zip, but as horseradish root varies hugely in strength according to when it's dug up, it's impossible to be precise about quantities.

If you can't find fresh horseradish, use 2 tablespoons of good quality bottled horseradish to about the same amount of crème fraîche (according to taste).

For 8

- 4 medium sized beetroot (I use 400g red and 400g golden beetroot)
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 30g butter
- splash of olive oil
- a few sprigs of thyme, leaves removed and finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 150ml double cream
- nutmeg, freshly grated
- salt and black pepper
- 3 or 4 sprigs of thyme, leaves picked, to decorate

For the pastry

- 200g plain flour
- a few sprigs of thyme, leaves finely chopped
- pinch of salt
- 100g butter

For the horseradish cream

- grated horseradish
- double cream or crème fraîche
- a little mustard powder
- pinch of white pepper
- salt
- lemon juice, to taste

First make the pastry. Sift the flour into a bowl and add the thyme and salt. Rub the butter into the flour, or pulse in a food processor, until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add just enough chilled water for it to



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bind together as a dough. Roll into a ball and wrap in cling film. Chill for an hour.

Meanwhile, boil the beetroot in salted water for at least 45 minutes, until soft. Drain, allow to cool a little, then peel. Grate the beetroot on the coarse blade of a grater (keeping the two colours separate if you have them).

Preheat the oven to 180c/gas mark 4 and heat a baking sheet until searing hot.

Roll out the dough on a floured surface to a thickness of 3-4mm and use to line a 30cm loose-bottomed tart tin, leaving the excess draped over the sides in case it shrinks.

Prick the base of the pastry case with a fork, line with greaseproof paper or foil and weigh this down with baking beans or rice. Place on the hot baking sheet and bake for about 15 minutes. Remove the baking beans and paper and cook the case for another 5 minutes to crisp the base a little. Take out of the oven and trim off the excess pastry. Keep the oven on and reheat the baking sheet.

Gently fry the onion in a pan with the butter and oil until translucent. Add the chopped thyme leaves and grated beetroot (if you have two colours, divide the onions and cook in separate pans). Add the vinegar and sugar and continue to cook gently for about 15 minutes, to reduce and make the mixture syrupy.

Fill the pastry case with the beetroot mixture, doing segments in different colours if you have them.

Whisk the eggs, cream and nutmeg and season with salt and pepper. Place the tart tin on the hot baking sheet in the oven, then pour in as much of the egg mixture as will fit easily over the beetroot. Scatter thyme leaves over the top, then bake for 35 minutes, until the top is starting to brown.

While the tart is cooking, peel and grate the horseradish. If you like it very strong, grate it just before you want to eat. It discolours quickly, so mix it with other ingredients immediately.

Add enough double cream or crème fraîche to the grated horseradish to give a creamy consistency. Mix in a little mustard powder, white pepper and salt, and finish by adding lemon juice to taste.

This recipe appears on p267 of [Sarah Raven's Food for Friends and Family](#) .

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