

DREAMY MINCE PIES

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Pastry:	Filling:	Topping:
225g plain flour	450g mincemeat	170g caster sugar
140g butter	1tbs brandy	3 egg whites
15g ground almonds	grated rind of 2 oranges (see **Footnote for variation)	
pinch of salt	1tbs orange juice	
15g caster sugar	4/5 small dried apricots (chopped)	
1-2tbs ice cold water		

1. Sift flour and salt into a bowl, add butter and rub in until mixture looks like fine breadcrumbs.
2. Stir in sugar and almonds.
3. Add 1tbs water.
4. Using a knife, mix to a crumbly dough, adding more water if necessary.
5. With the fingertips, draw dough together.
6. On a lightly floured surface, knead for about 1 minute.
7. Wrap in foil and chill in refrigerator for 30 minutes.
8. While waiting, mix together mincemeat, grated orange rind, chopped apricots, orange juice and brandy.
9. Roll out pastry thinly and cut 24 x 7.5 cm rounds and line into well-greased patty tins.
10. Fill cases $\frac{3}{4}$ full with mincemeat mixture.
11. Cook at gas mark 6/400°F/200°C for 15-20 minutes.
12. Whisk the egg whites until stiff.
13. Whisk in half the sugar and continue to whisk till the mixture forms stiff peaks.
14. Fold in remaining sugar.
15. Place a little on each cooked mince pie (or pipe in a circle), covering the mincemeat and making sure that the meringue touches the pastry all round.
16. Return to a slow oven, gas mark 2/300°F/150°C, for 20 minutes until meringue is firm and golden.
17. If desired, when cool, sprinkle with a very small amount of caster sugar to give a glistening, frosty effect.
18. Serve hot or cold and enjoy.

**Footnote: Depending on your preference, you can mix the grated orange rind into the pastry instead of the fruit mixture. Both methods make a great mince pie!