

# Blood and Guts Tarts

*Appetizer, Supper club, Vegetarian*

**Difficulty:** Medium **Source:** Greg Beckett ©2018

## INGREDIENTS

“Blood” —

### Puttanesca-esque Tomato Sauce:

**1 1/2** lbs fresh San Marzano tomatoes, rinsed and cut into chunks (or substitute large can whole San Marzano tomatoes)

**2** T olive oil

**1/2** t red pepper flakes

pinch saffron threads

**1** medium yellow onion, diced

**1 or 2** cloves garlic, minced

**2** t Italian herb blend (from The Spice House); or use a mix of oregano and thyme

**1** whole medium bay leaf

**3** anchovy filets packed in oil, drained and coarsely chopped

salt and pepper to taste

“Guts” —

### Squash:

One medium spaghetti squash (about 2-3 lbs)

**1/2** cup freshly grated parmesan cheese\* (you'll need 1/2 cup more for the tart topping)

**2** T butter

salt

pepper (freshly ground)

### Onions:

**2** T butter

**2** large onions, peeled, halved and sliced thinly

**2** t sugar

salt

pepper (freshly ground)

### Tart shells:

Sourdough Cracker dough made with Bob's Rye Flour and Italian Herb Seasoning blend (see separate recipe)

### Final assembly:

Vulcan Fire Salt (from the Spice House)

**8** oz. fontina cheese, shredded

**1/2** cup freshly grated parmesan, or more to taste

## DESCRIPTION

For the Foodies get-together at Halloween 2018, I put together ghoulish “blood and guts” tarts using a spicy puttanesca-like sauce to represent the blood; layers of caramelized onions and buttery spaghetti squash represent the guts. I pressed homemade sourdough rye cracker dough into madeleine forms and baked them ahead of time to make casket-shaped tart shells. A dash of Vulcan Fire Salt amped up the devilish spicy element. A topping of fontina and parmesan was sprinkled over the tarts before baking to heat the filling and melt the cheese.

There are a lot of separate components and advanced prep, but this can all be done ahead of time. You only need to pop the finished tarts into the oven at the last minute before serving.

## DIRECTIONS

### Squash

1. Prick whole spaghetti squash in several places. Place in an oblong casserole dish and cook in a 350°F oven for 45 minutes. Use mitts to grab each end of squash and turn it over. Continue roasting another 25 to 30 minutes, until it gives to pressure. Remove from oven and let cool until you can handle it.

2. Cut squash in half lengthwise and gently scrape out seeds with a spoon and discard. Using a fork, remove the shreds of squash flesh into a medium bowl. Dot with butter, sprinkle with salt and pepper and toss in the shredded parmesan cheese. Set aside.

### Onions

Heat butter in a large skillet. Stir in onions. Cook, stirring often, until lightly brown (about 8 minutes). Stir in salt and cook a few more minutes. Stir in sugar and cook for 1 minute, being careful not to let onions burn. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

### Sauce

1. Heat oil in a skillet. Stir in chopped onions. Cook, stirring often, until lightly brown (about 8 minutes). If onions seem a bit dry, add a bit more olive oil. Sprinkle on the red pepper flakes and crumble the saffron threads over. Stir and cook a few minutes to release the aromas from the spices. Add in garlic and cook for one more minute.

2. Stir in the tomatoes, roughly chopping them with a spoon or spatula. Add Italian herb blend and one bay leaf. Cover and let simmer for at least half hour. Stir and smash the tomatoes with spoon or spatula. Stir in the anchovy filets. Cover and simmer another half hour, watching that mixture does not burn. Remove and discard the bay leaf.

3. Add salt and black pepper to taste.

4. If you used fresh tomatoes, pass the mixture through a food mill to strain out the skins.

### Tart Shells

1. Prepare and chill the sourdough cracker dough, spitting into two discs before wrapping and chilling.

2. Roll out each portion of dough on a lightly flour board quite thin. Cut into elongated hexagon shapes and press each dough portion into a

madeleine tart shell. Trim excess dough. Prick each shell a few times with a fork.

3. Bake shells in a 350°F oven for 20 minutes, or until lightly browned

on the edges. Remove to a rack to cool.

### **Final Assembly**

1. Line a half-sheet pan with parchment paper. Set a rack over the parchment.
2. Fill each tart with about a teaspoonful of onions, and about two teaspoons of the squash. Spread about one teaspoon tomato sauce onto each tart. Sprinkle with Vulcan Fire Salt to taste.
3. Place filled tarts on the rack set over the sheet pan.
4. Sprinkle grated parmesan and fontina cheese over all the tarts.
5. Bake in a 350°F oven for 12-14 minutes, or until cheese is melted and bubbly.
6. Serve warm.

### **NOTES**

The filled tarts are placed on a wire-grid rack set in a half-sheet pan. The grid provides support so the convex-bottomed tarts don't topple over in the oven.