

The Best Japanese Knotweed Recipe: Strawberry Knotweed Pop-Tarts

Ingredients

For the Pastry:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/3 cup vegan butter, chilled
- ¼ cup vegetable shortening, chilled
- Ice water, as needed

For the Filling

- ½ cup cleaned and chopped young Japanese knotweed shoots
- ½ cup chopped strawberries
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. cornstarch

For the Glaze

- ¾ cup powdered sugar
- ½ tsp. cardamom powder
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp. soymilk, or more as needed

Steps

1. Start by making the pastry. Add a few ice cubes to half a cup of water, and set aside. Combine the salt and flour and whisk. Use a pastry cutter to cut the vegan butter and vegetable shortening into the flour, until you have a course texture. Once you've cut in the fats, add ice water, about one tablespoon at a time, not adding more water than you need, and mix until you have dough that comes together. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap, move it to the fridge, and prepare the filling.

2. Chop your strawberries and knotweed. Place them in a small saucepan, along with the sugar. Turn the heat on medium-low, stirring, while the sugar melts and the strawberries and knotweed release their juice. Once the fruit has broken down a good amount, add the lemon juice and cornstarch, whisking well to remove any clumps. Cook for another couple minutes while the jam thickens, stirring constantly, then remove from the heat and set aside.



3. Take the dough from the fridge, and divide into two even pieces. Place the piece you are not using first back in the fridge. Take the other half and roll it out on a lightly floured surface, until you have a rectangle that is roughly 9x12 inches. Cut it into 9 equally sized rectangles (3x4 inches), and place them on a baking sheet lined with a silicone mat. Place that baking sheet in the fridge, take out the second piece of pastry, and roll to the same size. Once the second piece is cut into 9 rectangles, remove the baking sheet from the fridge. To each of the rectangles on the baking sheet, add about ½ tbsp. of the strawberry knotweed filling into the center. Place a second piece of pastry on top. Use a fork around the edges to gently press down, sealing the filling inside. Once all the pastries are filled, place the baking sheet in the freezer to quickly chill them (you just want them cold, not frozen). Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C), and once the oven is at temperature, remove the pop-tarts from the freezer and place them directly in the oven.

4. Bake for about 25 minutes. Remove from the oven, and wait a couple minutes before transferring them to a cooling rack. Once they are completely cooled, you can glaze them. Combine all the ingredients for the glaze, and whisk well. You can add a little more soymilk if needed- you want it to be a fairly thick, but pourable texture. If you want pink icing, add one drop of food coloring to the icing. Pour or spoon some icing onto the tops of the completely cooled pop-tarts. Let that icing cool for at least 10 minutes so that it hardens. Eat right away, or store in an airtight container. For warm pop-tarts, reheat in a toaster oven at 350 for 5-10 minutes.

*Note: In some of my pop-tarts I did a candied knotweed decoration. If you wish to do that, simply slice knotweed into very thin circles. Combine 1 part water to 1 part sugar in a saucepan, and warm to dissolve. Put all the knotweed in the sugar, swish it around, and then remove. Place on a lined baking sheet, and dry in a 200°F oven for at least 30 minutes. When you glaze your pop-tarts, add the candied knotweed before the glaze hardens.