

COCONUT CREAM PIE

This is a new-and-improved version of my recipe in A Taste of Guam which was published back in 2006. I have found that if you do not cook the original filling with four egg yolks to the correct consistency, it will not hold its shape. I added two more egg yolks, 2 tbsp. more of cornstarch and ¼ c. more sugar. Also, I have learned to make a perfect meringue that will not bead, weep or seep! THIS MAKES ONLY ONE PIE.

You need to freeze two thick slices of vanilla pound cake the night before then grate it on a cheese grater to make cake crumbs; along with the crumbs, a hot filling actually makes for a no-syrup-dripping, deliciously creamy, soft meringue!

This meringue incorporates cornstarch slurry which prevents the syrup from beading at the top and it helps reduce seepage. This must be made before you start on the filling.

MEASURE the ingredients for your meringue before you start on the crust and filling. Do not actually make it, but your tools and ingredients must be ready to ensure your filling is hot once you top it with meringue. Buy fresh eggs (usually the organic, "fresh" and expensive ones in your local grocer). These eggs are best for making meringue, minimizing beading and weeping. Rinse your stainless steel bowls (it must be stainless steel) and electric beaters with boiling water then wipe them dry with a clean, never-used-to-wipe-butter-or-oil towel. Fats reduce the capacity of egg whites to attain a good volume and set properly.

from a fan: "It was too delicious. I only made one because it was a test run; my mistake. I didn't get to try, LOL! But, according to my babies, it was better than Safeway or Walmart bakery pies....so THANK YOU! I'm making 4 each for Christmas and for New Year's. That is how good my kids said it was. My boy told me that he was reminded of home. HE'S ONLY 11!"

CAKE CRUMBS

Set 1

Frozen vanilla pound cake

1. Cut off all the browned edges of the cake. Grate just the yellow parts over a fine-holed cheese grater and set aside. You need about 2 tbsp. of crumbs per pie.

CRUST

Set 1

Deep dish pie crust

1 egg white, slightly beaten

Tools: fork, pastry brush, small bowl

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the cookie sheet in the oven then preheat the oven according to the directions on the package of the crust, generally 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Thaw the pie crust.
3. Lightly beat the egg white in a small bowl with a fork.
4. Brush the entire pie crust liberally with the egg white, yes, including the rim and edge.
5. Prick the base and rim of the crust a few times with the tongs of the fork.
6. Bake the crust for 10 minutes, setting it on the cookie sheet.

7. Remove the crust from the oven and brush it liberally with the egg white again. This makes for a well-sealed, filled crust which stays crisp even after a few days.
8. Bake for three to four more minutes until it is a golden brown.
9. Remove from the oven and cool on a rack.
10. Reduce the oven temperature to 375 degrees.

CORNSTARCH SLURRY

Set 1

1 ½ tbsp. cornstarch
½ cup water
1 tbsp. superfine granulated sugar

Tools: small saucepan, rubber spatula, small pitcher

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the cornstarch, water and sugar in the sauce pan and heat on medium, stirring constantly.
2. Once mixture begins to thicken, reduce heat to medium low.
3. Stir until mixture is more translucent instead of white and is thick, but pourable. It's ok if you accidentally make it thick like pudding.
4. Pour mixture into a small pitcher or measuring cup and set aside. It will be used for the meringue.
5. If you end up with a ¼ cup of slurry (very thick like pudding), use all of it. If you are patient and still have a ½ cup (pourable) of slurry, use most of it, about 3 tbsp.

FILLING

Set 1

¾ cup sugar
½ cup cornstarch
1/8 tsp. salt
6 egg yolks

Set 2

2 ½ cup 2% milk, warmed slightly in the microwave if it is cold

Set 3

½ stick unsalted butter, sliced
2 cup grated coconut, warmed slightly in the microwave if it is cold

Tools: pot, rubber spatula, whisk, plastic wrap

1. Place sugar, cornstarch and salt into the pot and stir to mix.
2. Add egg yolks and use a rubber spatula to combine, forming a thick paste.
3. Slowly pour milk into the pot, using a whisk to combine.
4. Place the pot on the stove at medium heat.
5. Stir constantly with the whisk until it becomes a noticeably thick, flowing mixture.
6. Reduce the heat to medium low, cooking until mixture become very thick, like pudding.
7. Remove from the heat and add the butter.
8. Once the butter has melted, add the coconut.
9. Stir to thoroughly combine.

10. Leave filling in the pot.

11. Place plastic wrap **DIRECTLY ON THE SURFACE OF THE PUDDING** then store in the microwave until the meringue is done.

MERINGUE

Set 1

3 whole, fresh eggs plus two extras.....buy the eggs the morning of or day before you make the pie.

¼ tsp. cream of tartar

1 pinch of salt

Set 2

½ tsp. vanilla

6 tbsp. superfine sugar

Set 3

Cornstarch mixture

Set 4

2 tbsp. vanilla crumbs

Set 5

2 tbsp. grated coconut

Tools: *small bowl, plastic wrap, stainless steel bowl, electric beater, cake decorating off-set spatula, paper towels or clean kitchen towel, no-lip cookie sheet*

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the five whole eggs into a bowl of very warm water, about 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside.
2. Pour very hot water over stainless steel bowl and beaters to remove traces of oil or fat.
3. Wipe dry with paper towels or a very clean kitchen towel.
4. Drain the water from the whole eggs and wipe the eggs dry. Wipe the bowl dry too with a paper towel.
5. Separate the egg whites one at a time over the small bowl.
6. Pour the egg white from the small bowl into the stainless steel bowl; repeat for two more egg whites. If you break an egg yolk and it gets into the egg white, discard the egg, wash the bowl and repeat.
7. Add the cream of tartar and the salt to the egg whites.
8. Beat until the mixture is foamy.
9. Add the vanilla.
10. Continue beating as you add the 6 tbsp. of sugar a little at a time until soft peaks form. If you lift the beaters out of the egg whites, the tips should fall over.
11. Once you are at the soft peak stage, gradually pour in the cornstarch slurry, beating until stiff peaks. If you lift the beaters out of the egg whites, the tips should maintain their points.
12. Remove the filling from the microwave, uncover it and pour it all into the prepared crust. **THE FILLING SHOULD BE HOT TO THE TOUCH.** If it is not hot, place in the oven for five minutes to heat the surface.
13. **SPRINKLE** the vanilla crumbs over the entire surface of the filling.
14. Spoon the meringue over the filling and spread all the way around the edges so it slightly covers the rim of crust.
15. Flick the flat part of the spatula all over the surface of the meringue to make peaks and valleys as décor.
16. Sprinkle the shredded coconut over the meringue.
17. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes....on a cookie sheet. This makes it easier to remove from the oven.

18. If you forget the cookie sheet, slide the pie onto the cookie sheet before you remove it from the oven.
19. Completely cool the pie on a wire rack in a draft free area.
20. **ONCE COOLED**, pie may be placed in the fridge uncovered.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of Paulaq.com.