

MANHA CREAM PIE

My “Deliciously Coconut” video series is now on ehow.com and paula.com. One of the videos is “How to make coconut cream pie.” Check it out for a guide on baking the best frozen pie crust, keeping your manha pie filling hot, and on making the perfect meringue. Even though it is a coconut pie video, it will help you with how-to-make manha pie.

FYI – manha is the Chamorro term for young coconut. At it’s youngest stage, the young coconut is softer than Jell-O. As it matures, the young coconut becomes more firm, but still not quite as hard as a brown, mature coconut.

The original recipe came from my mom....from my aunt. It made six pies which was just too much for me. I cut the filling recipe in half to make two pies....and improved the meringue.

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.

This recipe makes two manha cream pies.

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

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

2 frozen deep-dish pie crusts

1 room temperature egg white

Tools: *pastry brush, small bowl, fork, no-lip cookie sheet*

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 crusts.
3. Lightly beat the egg white in a small bowl with a fork.
4. Brush both pie crusts liberally with the egg white, yes, including the rim and edge.
5. Prick the base and rim of the crusts a few times with the tongs of the fork.
6. Bake the crusts for 10 minutes, setting it on the cookie sheet.
7. Remove the crusts 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

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

- 3 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 cup water
- 2 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 half cup (very thick) of slurry, use all of it. If you are patient and still have 1 cup (pourable) of slurry, use only a ½ cup.

FILLING

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

- 1 ½ c. manha juice
- 1 c. chopped manha (equivalent to a 20 oz. can of young coconut)
- ½ stick of unsalted butter
- ½ c. granulated sugar
- 1 – 13 oz. can of evaporated milk
- 1 – 13 oz. can refilled with water

Set 2

- 3 egg yolks at room temperature

¼ box or 4 oz. of cornstarch (sorry....I used my digital kitchen scale to measure 4 oz.....not sure what the cup measurement is....you could always measure a whole, 1-pound box then divide by four ☺)

1 tsp. vanilla extract

½ tsp. rum extract (optional)

¼ c. water

Tools: *large pot that can fit in your microwave, small bowl, large whisk, plastic wrap*

DIRECTIONS

1. Place all of the ingredients under set 1, for the filling, into a large pot.
2. Heat the ingredients on medium heat and stir to mix.
3. In the mean time, mix all of the ingredients in set 2, for the filling, in a small bowl and set aside.
4. Stir the heating pot and bring it to a gentle boil.
5. Once the large pot of manna and liquids boils, slowly add the egg yolk / cornstarch mixture to the pot and whisk well. This will thicken before it comes back to a gentle boil.
6. Cook for two more minutes after the new mixture begins boiling again.
7. Remove from the heat and place the plastic wrap directly over the filling. Put the pot in the microwave so the filling stays hot.

MERINGUE

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

6 whole, room temperature fresh eggs plus extras (in case you break a yolk into the white).....buy the eggs the morning of or day before you make the pie.

½ tsp. cream of tartar

2 pinches of salt

Set 2

1 tsp. vanilla

¾ c. superfine sugar

Set 3

Cornstarch slurry

Set 4

¼ c. vanilla crumbs

Tools: *medium 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 eight whole eggs into a bowl of very warm water, about 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and set aside for 10 minutes. You may have to repeat this heating process if your eggs are cold out of the fridge.

2. Drain the water from the whole eggs and wipe the eggs dry. Wipe the bowl dry too with a paper towel.
3. Separate the egg whites one at a time over the small bowl.
4. Pour the egg white from the small bowl into the stainless-steel bowl; repeat for five more egg whites (remember you only need six, the other two are just-in-case.) If you break an egg yolk and it gets into the egg white, discard the egg, wash the bowl and repeat.
5. Add the cream of tartar and the salt to the egg whites.
6. Beat until the mixture is foamy.
7. Add the vanilla.
8. Continue beating as you add the super-fine 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.
9. Once you are at the soft peak stage, gradually pour in the cornstarch mixture or spoon it in, beating until stiff peaks. If you lift the beaters out of the egg whites, the tips should maintain their points.
10. Remove the filling from the microwave, uncover it and pour it all into the prepared crusts. **THE FILLING SHOULD BE HOT TO THE TOUCH.** (If it is not very warm, place the filled pie crusts on a no-lip cookie sheet then put in the oven for five minutes to heat the surface then remove from the oven...leave oven turned on.)
11. **SPRINKLE** the vanilla crumbs over the entire surface of the filling of both pies.
12. Spoon the meringue over the filling and spread all the way around the edges so it **SLIGHTLY COVERS THE RIM all the way around.**
13. Flick the flat part of the spatula all over the surface of the meringue to make peaks and valleys as décor.
14. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes on the cookie sheets.
15. Completely cool the pies on the cookie sheet on a wire rack in a draft free area.
16. **Once completely cooled**, pies may be placed in the fridge uncovered. Refrigerating a warm or hot pie will likely result in beading on the meringue.

Note: I've only made manha pie once before.....and it was soooooo delish after two days. If you taste the filling from the leftovers out of the pot, it may not taste all that yummy....BUT, it really is delish over the next few days.....even my husband loved it!

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of PaulaQ.com