

Tips For Success:

PERFECT CREAM PIES

Pie is America's favorite dessert, according to a recent Gallup survey, and for many pie lovers, luscious cream pies are the most popular choice.

Even if your pie-making skills are out of practice or you have never tried a "from scratch" cream filling before, you can make a perfect cream pie with this recipe. The foolproof recipe offers detailed instructions for each part of the pie, plus extra tips to help insure success.

The first step is preparing the pie crust. The recipe eliminates the difficult tasks of mixing and rolling the dough by using refrigerated all ready pie crusts. The tender, flaky crust is ready to place in your pie pan, but you add your own decorative fluted edge.

If you find you are "all thumbs" when fluting the crust, follow the how-to sketches for an easy method that creates an attractive, high scalloped edge.

With this cream filling recipe, you can make a delicious vanilla cream pie or try other easy flavor variations. The basic method is the same, and careful stirring gives the smooth, creamy texture that identifies the perfect cream pie.

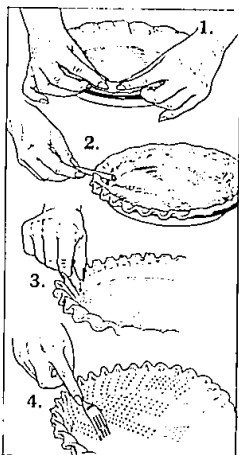
For the final topping, choose either golden brown meringue or whipped cream. Recipes show the exact proportions of ingredients for each, and the tips help prevent problems.

When you want an even quicker and easier pie, Slices of Lemon Pie is a good alternative. This smooth filling does not need cooking in advance. Instead the ingredients are simply mixed together and poured into the unbaked pie crust. A top crust is added, so no meringue or whipped topping is needed.

As the pie bakes, the recipe forms a tangy lemon filling, which is accented with thin slices of lemon. Use one lemon for a mild citrus flavor, but add the second lemon if you prefer a more tart filling.

Tips For Success:

FLUTED PIE CRUST



1. Gently ease one Pillsbury Refrigerated All Ready Pie Crust into 9-inch pie pan. Fold excess pie crust under, so the edge of the dough is even with the rim of the pan. Press crust between fingers to form high stand-up ridge on rim of pie pan.

2. Using handle of wooden spoon or table knife, make indentations angled diagonally about 3/4 inch apart in pie crust ridge. Press handle firmly into dough.

3. To make the scallops higher and thinner, press each section of dough firmly between thumb and forefinger while pressing down on rim of pan.

4. With fork, generously prick holes in bottom and side of unbaked crust. Bake at 450°F. for 9 to 11 minutes or until lightly browned.



By following the simple flavor variations in the recipe, you can make this luscious coconut cream pie. For the attractive garnish, sprinkle coconut over the meringue before baking, then add hazelnuts when the pie is ready to serve.

VANILLA CREAM PIE

15-oz. pkg. Pillsbury All Ready Pie Crusts
1 teaspoon flour

FILLING

3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 1/4 cups milk
3 egg yolks
3 tablespoons margarine or butter
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Prepare pie crust according to package directions for unfilled 1-crust pie. (Refrigerate remaining crust for later use.)

In medium saucepan, combine sugar, flour and salt. In medium bowl, beat milk and egg yolks until smooth; stir into sugar mixture. (Reserve egg whites for making meringue.) Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and boils. Boil and stir one minute. Remove from heat; stir in margarine and vanilla. Pour hot filling into cooled baked crust.

If topping with meringue, spoon prepared meringue onto hot filling, sealing edges. Bake as directed; cool and refrigerate 3 hours. If topping with whipped cream, place plastic wrap or waxed paper on hot filling to prevent film from forming. Cool and refrigerate 3 hours or until filling is set. Top with sweetened whipped cream just before serving. Store in refrigerator. 8 servings.

Cream Pie Variations

For the following pies, follow recipe for Vanilla Cream Pie with the recommended changes. All pies can be topped with meringue when filling is hot or with sweetened whipped cream when filling is cold.

Chocolate Cream Pie: Increase sugar to 1 cup and add 2 squares unsweetened chocolate to mixture before cooking.

Butterscotch Cream Pie: Substitute 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar for granulated sugar.

Banana Cream Pie: Thinly slice 2 bananas into pie crust; top with filling.

Coconut Cream Pie: Stir 1 cup coconut into cooled filling. For coconut whipped cream topping, sprinkle 1/4 cup coconut over topping. For coconut meringue, sprinkle 1/4 cup coconut over meringue before baking.

Tips For Success:

CREAM FILLING

Blend filling ingredients together before placing over heat. Use a heavy saucepan for even heating. Cook over medium heat.

Stir filling constantly while cooking. Stirring distributes the heat throughout the mixture, so it thickens evenly, and prevents lumps and scorching.

Pour the hot filling into a cooled, baked pie crust.

If the pie is not topped with meringue, place plastic wrap or waxed paper on the hot filling to prevent film from forming on the surface.

Refrigerate cream pies as soon as they reach room temperature. Pies should be refrigerated at least three hours before serving to allow filling to set.

MERINGUE

3 egg whites
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup sugar

Heat oven to 350°F. In small deep bowl, beat egg whites, cream of tartar and vanilla at medium speed until soft peaks form, about 1 minute.

Add sugar 1 tablespoon at a time, beating at high speed until stiff glossy peaks form and sugar is dissolved. Spoon meringue onto hot filling in mounds around edge of pie. Spread over pie; push to edges of crust to seal well and prevent shrinkage. Use narrow spatula or knife to swirl meringue. Bake at 350°F. for 12 to 15 minutes until golden brown. Cool pie on wire rack; refrigerate 3 hours or until filling is set. Store in refrigerator.

Tips For Success:

MERINGUE

A meringue topping should be prepared and spread on immediately after pouring the hot filling into the crust.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Higher temperatures can cause the meringue to shrink.

For easier handling, separate eggs when they are cold. For each egg, place egg white into a small cup before transferring to bowl for beating. This prevents accidentally spilling egg yolk into the entire batch of egg whites, which will prevent whites from beating to desired stiffness.

For best volume, allow egg whites to come to room temperature while cooking filling. Use a small deep bowl, and be sure beaters and bowl are completely clean and free of any grease. Use an electric mixer.

Add cream of tartar to the whites before beating to stabilize them. Do not add salt, because it lowers stability.

Beat whites only to soft peak stage before adding sugar. Measure sugar carefully and add gradually while beating, about a tablespoon at a time. Beat until whites form glossy peaks that stand up straight when beaters are removed.

Spread meringue immediately over hot filling from the outside edges toward the center of the pie. The meringue should be sealed to the crust to prevent shrinking during baking.

To cut pie, use a sharp knife dipped into hot water before each cut.

To cover meringue topped pies, insert toothpicks halfway into meringue; cover with plastic wrap.

SWEETENED WHIPPED CREAM

1 cup (1/2 pint) whipping cream
2 tablespoons powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

In small bowl, beat cream until soft peaks form. Blend in sugar and vanilla; beat until stiff peaks form. Spoon onto pie. 2 cups.

Tips For Success:

WHIPPED CREAM

Chill bowl and beaters well in refrigerator. Cream should be well chilled (colder than 45°F.). Beat with electric mixer or rotary beater.

Add powdered sugar and vanilla after cream reaches soft peak stage; beat until stiff peaks form and cream is still glossy. Do not overbeat or cream can begin to form butter.

If cream starts to turn to butter, beat in a few tablespoons of cream or evaporated milk.

SLICES OF LEMON PIE (not illustrated)

15-oz. pkg. Pillsbury All Ready Pie Crusts
1 teaspoon flour

FILLING

2 cups sugar
1/3 cup flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup water
2 tablespoons margarine or butter, softened
3 eggs
2 to 3 teaspoons grated orange peel
1 to 2 lemons, peeled, sliced 1/8-inch thick

Prepare pie crust according to package directions for 2-crust 9-inch pie. Do not use 8-inch pie pan. Heat oven to 400°F.

In large bowl, combine sugar, flour and salt. Add water, margarine, eggs and orange peel; beat until well blended. Stir in lemon slices. Pour mixture into pie crust-lined pan. Top with second crust and flute; cut slits in several places. Bake at 400°F. for 35 to 45 minutes or until golden brown. Cool completely on wire rack before serving. Refrigerate leftovers. 8 servings.

TIP: Cover edge of pie crust with strip of aluminum foil during last 10 to 15 minutes of baking, if necessary to prevent excessive browning.