

Danny's Favorite Coconut Cream Pie with Meringue

My husband's absolute favorite pie is coconut cream with meringue. I don't make it enough, I imagine... probably because I don't care for it! But since it *is* his favorite and I'm such a good wife ;-)

Perfect Pie Crust Ingredients and Instructions and prep:

Most of the time I use store-bought crusts for this recipe and that works absolutely fine. I've found that I don't like refrigerated or frozen ready-made crusts as much as the Betty Crocker pie crust mix. So, if you're in a pinch, feel free to shortcut the crust. If not, here is a recipe from a friend:

5 cups flour

2 cups shortening

1 egg

1 cup cold water

2 tablespoons vinegar

Pinch of salt

This recipe can be halved for one-crust pies. Mix and roll into one or two balls depending on use. Place ball on floured surface and using a lightly floured rolling pin, roll out for pans.

For this pie, bake the crust at 350 degrees for about eight minutes or until lightly browned. Be sure to poke holes in the crust and if you have any baking beads use those to make sure the crust doesn't puff up during browning. I don't have beads, so I usually put a few forks or other silverware on top of the crust to weight it down.

Pie filling ingredients

2/3 cup of sugar (I make this with Splenda or Stevia for the hubby since he's diabetic.)

1/4 cup of cornstarch

1/2 teaspoon of salt

3 cups of whole milk

4 eggs, separating yolks and whites

2 tablespoons of softened butter

2 teaspoons of vanilla (or more... you can never have enough vanilla!)

1 cup of coconut

Instructions for filling:

Combine sugar, cornstarch and salt in a 2-quart saucepan. Turn on medium heat and add milk, egg yolks and butter slowly to be sure the eggs don't cook. Stir the mixture over the heat, being sure it doesn't stick to the bottom as it thickens. When the mixture is the consistency of warm pudding, remove from the heat and add 3/4 cup of coconut and vanilla, stirring well. Pour the mixture into the warm pie crust and set aside.

Instructions for meringue:

Mix 1 tablespoon cornstarch and 5 tablespoons of sugar well. Over medium heat, add 1/2 cup of cold water. Cook until the mixture thickens and becomes clear. Cool the mixture in the fridge. Beat four egg whites with 1/8 teaspoon of cream of tartar at high speed until almost ready to stand in soft peaks. Add the cooked mixture slowly and beat for four to five minutes until standing in stiff peaks.

Seal the meringue over the top of the pie, then sprinkle the top with the remaining 1/4 cup of coconut. Bake at 350 degrees for fifteen minutes or until browned.

Bonus: While I don't care for coconut cream pie, I absolutely LOVE toasted coconut. So whenever I make this pie I cook it on a sheet cake pan lined with aluminum foil and I spread some more coconut onto the foil. Then I can enjoy some toasted coconut while hubby has his pie!

History snippet:

Meringue, a mixture of stiffly beaten egg, was invented in the 1700s by a Swiss pastry chef named Gasparini. It was often piped into shapes and placed on top of fruits then dried slowly in an oven. It was in the United States that meringue began to be used to top pies, especially lemon meringue and then baked until browned. Baked Alaska is another derivation of meringue in which frozen ice cream is placed on a slice of sponge cake, then topped with meringue. The recipe is browned quickly so that the meringue is warm but the ice cream remains cold.