

INDIVIDUAL LEMON MERINGUE PIES

INGREDIENTS

2 cups graham crackers crumbs
6 tablespoons butter, melted
1 tablespoon sugar

For the lemon filling

3 eggs yolks (save the whites for the meringue)
1 1/2 cups sugar
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1 1/2 cups water
2 tablespoons butter
1 to 2 teaspoons finely zested lemon peel
1/3 cup lemon juice

for the meringue

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

You will also need: 4 1/2-cup canning jars

DIRECTIONS

In a small mixing bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs, butter and sugar. Divide the mixture in half and set half aside. Divide the rest (approximately 1 cup) between the six canning jars and press the mixture on the bottom, creating a crust. Set aside.

For the filling, in a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, flour, cornstarch, and a dash of salt. Gradually stir in the water. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until thickened and bubbly. Reduce heat. Cook and stir 2 minutes more.

Remove from heat. Slightly beat egg yolks with a fork. Temper the mixture with the eggs by gradually stir about 1 cup of the hot filling into the yolks. Pour egg yolk mixture into hot filling in saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil. Cook and stir 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in butter and lemon zest. Gently stir in lemon juice. Keep filling warm while preparing meringue.

Prepare the meringue. In a large mixing bowl combine egg whites, vanilla and cream of tartar. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed about 1 minute or until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating on high speed about 4 minutes more or until mixture forms stiff, glossy peaks (tips stand up straight) and sugar dissolves.

Fill each of the canning jars about half way with the lemon mixture, then take remainder of the graham cracker mixture and make an "intermediary crust" (note: you can't press it down of course, but make a layer that is at least visible from the outside of the glass). Fill remaining lemon mixture into the jars until just under the rim of the glass.

Using a piping big, spread meringue over warm filling, all the way to the edge of the glass. Using a kitchen torch, brown the edges of the meringue to harden and caramelize. Chill in refrigerator for 3 to 6 hours before serving.