

COCONUT CREAM PIE

INGREDIENTS

For crust

2 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar
3/4 teaspoon salt
10 tablespoons (1 1/4 sticks) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1/3 cup chilled solid vegetable shortening, diced
6 tablespoons (or more) ice water

For coconut filling

2 cups 2% low-fat milk
1 cup half-and-half
1 1/2 cups flaked sweetened coconut
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
2/3 cup sugar
1/3 cup cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon salt
4 large egg yolks
2 tablespoons butter

For meringue topping

3 large egg whites, at room temperature
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup flaked sweetened coconut, toasted

DIRECTIONS

Blend flour, sugar and salt in processor. Add butter and shortening and cut in using on/off turns until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add 6 tablespoons ice water and process until moist clumps form, adding more water by teaspoonfuls if dough is dry. Gather into ball; divide into 2 pieces. Flatten each into disk. Wrap each in plastic; chill 2 hours.

Position rack in lowest third of oven and preheat to 425F. Roll out 1 dough disk on floured surface to 12-inch round. Transfer to 9-inch-diameter pie dish. Fold edge under, forming high-standing rim; crimp. Line dough with foil; arrange pie weights on foil. Bake at 425F for 25 minutes; remove weights and foil, and bake an additional 10 minutes or until golden. Cool completely on a wire rack. While the oven is on, toast 1/4 cup flaked sweetened coconut. Set aside to cool.

Combine milk and half-and-half in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add 1 1/2 cups coconut. Scrape seeds from vanilla bean; stir seeds and pod into milk mixture. Bring milk mixture to a simmer; immediately remove from heat. Cover and let stand 15 minutes.

Strain milk mixture through a cheesecloth-lined sieve into a bowl. Gather edges of cheesecloth; squeeze over bowl to release moisture. Discard solids.

Combine 2/3 cup sugar, cornstarch, salt, and egg yolks in a large bowl, stirring with a whisk. Gradually add milk mixture to egg yolk mixture, stirring constantly. Return mixture to pan; bring to a boil, whisking constantly. Remove from heat. Add butter; whisk until smooth. Place pan in a large ice-filled bowl for 6 minutes, stirring to cool. Pour into prepared crust. Cover and chill at least 1 hour.

Place 3 egg whites and cream of tartar in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at high speed until soft peaks form. Combine 1/2 cup sugar and 1/4 cup water in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Cook, without stirring, until candy thermometer registers 250F. Pour hot sugar syrup in a thin stream over egg whites, beating at high speed until thick. Spread meringue over pie. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours. Top with toasted coconut before serving.