

Washington Post Chocolate Cream Pie

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This pie is only as good as the chocolate you use. And if you're going to treat yourself to a chocolate cream pie, why hold back? Buy the kind you most enjoy savoring, be it semisweet or dark. Similarly, if you're not making your own pie crust, spend a few extra dollars on a premade one that's all-butter. This pie is meant to be indulgent.

You may have leftover pudding and/or whipped cream once you have assembled the pie.

Make ahead: The pie crust can be made and kept at room temperature up to 1 day in advance. The pudding can be made ahead and refrigerated for up to 4 days. If making the pudding in advance, place a piece of plastic wrap on top of the pudding to prevent skin from forming.

Storage Notes: Leftover pie may be covered and refrigerated for up to 3 days. The crust may get soggy after 1 day.

Ingredients

Pie Filling

- 2 large egg yolks
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar, divided
- 4 cups (946 milliliters) half-and-half
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (65 grams) cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (25 grams) Dutch-process unsifted cocoa powder
- 10 ounces (285 grams) chopped chocolate, preferably semisweet
- 2 tablespoons (30 grams) unsalted butter
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 blind-baked pie crust, store-bought or homemade (see related recipe), cooled (see NOTE)

Whipped Cream

- 2 cups (480 milliliters) heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (65 grams) unsifted confectioners' sugar
- 4 ounces (115 grams) mascarpone
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 good-quality chocolate bar, for shaving

Instructions

1. Make the pie: In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (50 grams) sugar until combined (the mixture should be thick and pale in color as you whisk the ingredients together). Set aside.

2. In a medium heavy-bottomed saucepan over high heat, whisk together the half-and-half, the remaining ½ cup (100 grams) sugar, the cornstarch, and cocoa powder, and cook, whisking constantly until the mixture begins to steam, about 5 minutes. Add the chopped chocolate and continue to whisk until the pudding comes to a boil. The mixture will start to thicken fairly fast.
3. Reduce the heat to medium and continue to cook, whisking constantly, for 1 minute, then remove from the heat; the mixture should be thick, like pudding. Add the egg yolk mixture and butter and whisk vigorously to combine, for 1 minute. Whisk in the salt and vanilla until combined.
4. Pour the pudding into the blind-baked pie shell (you do not have to wait for it to cool if you're pressed for time), cover with a piece of plastic wrap and gently press it to the surface of the pudding. Refrigerate the pie for about 4 hours, until fully set.
5. Make the whipped cream: At least 15 minutes before you're ready to serve the pie, in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment (or using a handheld mixer and a free-standing large bowl), combine the heavy cream, confectioners' sugar, mascarpone, and vanilla. Beat the ingredients on medium-low until fully mixed, then increase the speed to high and whip the mixture until stiff peaks form about 2 minutes. Pile the whipped cream on top of the pie, then use a vegetable peeler to shower it with chocolate shavings. Refrigerate until set, about 10 minutes. Serve cold.

NOTE: To blind-bake a pie crust, position a baking rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 425°. Gently line your deep-dish pie crust (already fitted into the pie plate, crimped as per your preference, and chilled in the freezer for at least 30 minutes) with foil and weigh it down with pie weights, beans, rice or pennies. Place the pie dish on top of a large, rimmed baking sheet and transfer to the oven. Bake for 15 minutes, then remove the foil with the weights and continue to bake for 5 to 7 minutes, until the pie crust is light golden brown. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool before filling.