

## Fudgy Tar Heel Pie

From *Cook's Country* | August/September 2016

### WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

To correct the cloying sweetness of this brownie pie without sacrificing fudgy texture, we replaced the white sugar with dark brown sugar, which introduces depth and molasses undertones. Upping the vanilla and salt and adding cocoa powder finishes the job. To make the pie gooey and fudgy but not runny, we backed the flour down to just ¼ cup (half what most recipes call for), and we use half butter and half oil for the fat (oil makes for a softer, chewier crumb). Final prebaking the pie crust and toasting the nuts before adding them to the batter ensures that both stay crispy.

SERVES 8

Serve with ice cream.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 (9-inch) single-crust pie dough
- 170g 1 cup (6 ounces) <sup>plain (35-50% coco)</sup> semisweet chocolate chips
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 60ml 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 150g 3/4 cup packed (5 1/4 ounces) dark brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 28g 1/4 cup (1 1/4 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 155g 1 1/4 cups pecans, toasted and chopped coarse

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Roll dough into 12-inch circle on lightly floured counter. Loosely roll dough around rolling pin and gently unroll it onto 9-inch pie plate, letting excess dough hang over edge. Ease dough into plate by gently lifting edge of dough with 1 hand while pressing into plate bottom with your other hand. Leave any dough that overhangs plate in place. Trim overhang to ½ inch beyond lip of pie plate. Tuck overhang under itself; folded edge should be flush with edge of pie plate. Crimp dough evenly around edge of pie using your fingers. Wrap dough-lined pie plate loosely in plastic wrap and place in freezer until dough is fully chilled and firm, about 15 minutes.
2. Line chilled pie shell with two 12-inch squares of parchment paper, letting parchment lie over edges of dough, and fill with pie weights. Bake until lightly golden around edges, 18 to 25 minutes. Carefully remove parchment and weights, rotate pie shell, and continue to bake until center begins to look opaque and slightly drier, 3 to 6 minutes. Let cool completely.
- 190 3. Reduce oven to 325 degrees. Combine 2/3 cup chocolate chips and butter in bowl and microwave at 50 percent power, stirring often, until melted, about 90 seconds. Whisk in oil and cocoa until smooth.
- 160 4. In separate bowl, whisk sugar, eggs, vanilla, and salt together until smooth. Whisk chocolate mixture into sugar mixture until incorporated. Stir in flour and remaining 1/3 cup chocolate chips until just combined.
5. Spread pecans in bottom of pie shell, then pour batter over top, using spatula to level. Bake pie until toothpick

inserted in center comes out with thin coating of batter attached, 30 to 35 minutes. Let pie cool on wire rack until barely warm, about 1½ hours. Serve. (Pie can be reheated, uncovered, in a 300 degree oven until warm throughout, 10 to 15 minutes.)

150

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TEST KITCHEN DISCOVERY: NUT REGIMEN

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- 1.** For better flavor and to ensure that the pecans don't get soggy, toast them in a 350-degree oven for about 5 minutes.

175



- 2.** Sprinkle the nuts in the bottom of the prebaked pie shell; don't mix them into the filling. This way, the pie shell won't get soggy and the pie will be easy to slice.

