

Chocolate Cream Pie

Serve 8

For the best chocolate flavor and texture, we recommend Callebaut semisweet chocolate or Hershey's Special Dark and Hershey's unsweetened chocolate. Other brands of chocolate sandwich cookies may be substituted for the Oreos, but avoid any "double-filled" cookies because the proportion of cookie to filling won't be correct. Do not combine the egg yolks and sugar in advance of making the filling - the sugar will begin to break down the yolks, and the finished cream will be pitted.

CRUST

16 Oreo cookies, broken into rough pieces
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, melted and cooled

FILLING

2 1/2 cups half and half
1/3 cup (2 1/3 ounces) sugar
Pinch table salt
6 large egg yolks
2 tablespoons cornstarch
6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter, cut into 6 pieces
6 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, chopped fine
1 ounce unsweetened chocolate, chopped fine
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

TOPPING

1 1/2 cups heavy cream, chilled
2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. FOR THE CRUST: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Pulse the cookies in a food processor until coarsely ground, about 15 pulses, then continue to process to fine, even crumbs, about 15 seconds. Sprinkle the butter over the crumbs and pulse to incorporate.
2. Sprinkle the mixture into a 9-inch pie plate. Use the bottom of a measuring cup to press the crumbs into an even layer on the bottom and sides of the pie plate. Bake until the crust is fragrant and looks set, 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer the crust to a wire rack and cool completely.
3. FOR THE FILLING: Bring the half and half, 3 tablespoons of sugar, and the salt to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium high heat, stirring occasionally.
4. As the half and half mixture begins to simmer, whisk the egg yolks, cornstarch, and remaining sugar together in a medium bowl until smooth. Slowly whisk about 1 cup of the simmering half and half mixture into the yolk mixture to temper, then slowly whisk the tempered yolks back into the simmering saucepan. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, whisking vigorously, until the mixture is thickened and a few bubbles burst on the surface about 30 seconds.

5. Off the heat, whisk in the butter and chocolates until completely smooth and melted. Stir in the vanilla. Pour the warm filling into the baked and cooled pie crust. Lay a sheet of plastic wrap directly on the surface of the filling and refrigerate the pie until the filling is chilled and set, about 4 hours.

6. FOR THE TOPPING: Before serving, whip the cream, sugar, and vanilla together with an electric mixer on medium low speed until frothy, about 1 minute. Increase the mixer speed to high and continue to whip until the cream forms soft peaks, 1 to 3 minutes. Spread the whipped cream attractively over the top of the pie.