

LONELY CHRISTMAS PIE

Many people experience a lonely ache at the holidays. This pie holds space for that experience, and then makes it good. This recipe makes 8 individual, half-pear pies with a rum custard filling. Simple, elegant and meaningful, it serves up healing as we remember that joy and sorrow are two sides of the same coin and we can fill the void with warmth and reverent gratitude for every day we get to live and choose joy however we can.

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

CRUST:

- 2 cups flour
- 2/3 cup butter, 1/2 inch cubes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 5-7 tablespoons chilled water (or more as needed)
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 teaspoon water

FILLING:

- 4 pears (red Anjou or Bosc)
- 9 ounces whole milk
- 1 teaspoon rum extract
- 2 egg yolks
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons flour
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch



PREPARATION

PREPARE THE FILLING:

- 1.** In a medium sauce pot, add milk and rum extract and simmer over medium heat. In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, sugar, flour and cornstarch.
- 2.** Once the milk is boiling, temper the egg mixture by pouring some of the hot milk into the bowl. Whisk together until smooth. If you see lumps, strain through a fine mesh strainer.
- 3.** Combine everything in the sauce pot and bring to a boil over medium heat. Watch the custard begin to thicken. Once it boils, stir for one minute. Remove from heat. Cover and seal, then refrigerate.

Preparation continued on back.

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PREPARATION (CONT.)

PREPARE THE PEARS:

1. Slice in half. Then, using a melon baller, scoop out the core center.

PREPARE THE CRUST:

1. Mix flour and salt together in a large bowl. Add chilled butter cubes and using a pastry cutter or food processor, cut the mixture until the butter is sandy in texture. Slowly add chilled water 1 tablespoon at a time, tossing (not kneading) to combine with the mixture. Note: the dough is hydrated just right when the dough gathers loosely into a 1-2 inch thick disc without excess flour falling away from the disc. Wrap it air-tight in plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes to 1 hour.

2. Unwrap the dough disc and on a lightly floured surface, roll into a large circle about 1/4 inch thick. Slice it into four pieces.

3. Scoop the chilled custard onto the center of a dough slice (approximately 1/4-1/3 cup). Place a pear half face down on the custard. Wrap the dough around the pear and mold it as you desire to cover the pear. Optional: use any dough scraps to shape a leaf or two for each pear.

4. Paint with egg wash and sprinkle with turbinado sugar. Bake at 350° F for about 45 minutes.

Serve in a basket or individually on each plate.