

CHOCOLATE MERINGUE PIE

from Kristen Kauffman [co-owner, Café Urbano]:

When this East Dallas restaurateur thinks of comfort food, the first thing that comes to mind isn't the paninis or marinated duck plates on her Cafe Urbano menu, though those are delightful. It's Grandma's chocolate meringue pie, which she makes for her family every year at Christmas.

"She and I are the only ones in the family that have been able to make the pie. I believe she clipped the recipe out of a magazine in the '40s, and made it for bridge club, book club, and church functions," Kauffman says fondly of her grandmother, who passed away last summer at the age of 100. "I've given out the recipe, as did she, several times over the years, but no one besides her and me has been able to make it 'just so'."

MERINGUE PIE SHELL:

- 🌀 3 egg whites
 - 🌀 ¼ tsp cream of tartar
 - 🌀 ¾ c of sugar
 - 🌀 ¼ tsp vanilla (*optional*)
- Preheat oven to 275 degrees.
 - Whip egg whites until frothy, and add cream of tartar (*and vanilla, if desired*).
 - Beat until the mixture stands in glossy peaks.
 - Gradually add sugar while continuing to beat (*it will get very stiff*).
 - Spread the mixture, forming the shape of a pie shell, into a well greased metal pie pan.
 - Bake at 275 degrees for 20 minutes.
 - Increase temperature to 300 degrees and bake another 40 minutes.
 - Turn the oven off, and leave the pie inside overnight (*a gas stove is ideal; the pilot will crisp the shell overnight*).

CHOCOLATE FILLING:

- 🌀 2-3 Tbsp water
 - 🌀 6 oz bittersweet chocolate chips
 - 🌀 1 c heavy whipping cream
- In a saucepan or double boiler, heat water, then add chocolate chips to slowly melt chocolate.
 - Once the chocolate is silky smooth, remove from heat, and allow chocolate to cool completely at room temperature (not in the fridge).
 - While chocolate is cooling, whip the cream until stiff (you can refrigerate whipped cream until chocolate cools, if needed).
 - Gently fold the cream into the cooled chocolate until completely blended.
 - Fill the meringue with the chocolate cream, and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Comments and tips: "I make this pie every year at Christmas — actually I make two so there's plenty — and it absolutely melts in your mouth. A tip: The egg yolks you don't use are perfect for making a hollandaise sauce for eggs Benedict or to serve over asparagus. 🌀"