

SALTED CARAMEL PEAR PIE

By Judy Kim | Yield: 1 (9-inch) Pie

I love this lesser known combination in comparison to apples and caramel, but it easily interchangeable, perhaps one the things I love most about pie. Recipes are suggestions and hope that with each pie, each baker personalizes them with small changes and substitutions when necessary.

This Springtime Garden Wreath pie design is a labor of love. In many ways the making of this is no different than the arts and crafts techniques I learned from my Mom. But I say, make a pie that suits you, and if time is a factor use a full pie crust in lieu of this detailed design, it will still taste delicious. See the video below for a demo.

INGREDIENTS

CRUST

1 double crust pie dough, [Buttermilk Pie Crust \(makes enough dough for all the decoration\)](#)

All-purpose flour, for rolling dough

1 egg

1 tablespoon heavy cream

SALTED CARAMEL

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter (preferably European butter)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond extract

1 teaspoon flaky sea salt

FILLING

4 Anjou pears, peeled, cored and thinly sliced

1 tablespoon lemon zest (Meyer lemon if available)

1 lemon, juiced

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar

3 tablespoons tapioca flour (or cornstarch)

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 1/4-inch cubes and frozen

DIRECTIONS

1. To make the salted almond caramel, heat a large sauce pan over medium heat. Combine 1/4 cup water and 3/4 cup sugar, swirl the pan to help them dissolve. Add slices of butter, bring to a boil and simmer until golden brown, about 10 minutes. At this stage, stir occasionally using a wooden spoon. Watch the mixture carefully as it can burn. Turn off heat and add heavy cream carefully as it will bubble intensely. While continuing to stir, add almond extract (for stronger flavor add 1 teaspoon almond extract instead) and sea salt. Set aside to cool. This can be made in advance and kept in the refrigerator for a few weeks.
2. Let the prepared [Buttermilk Pie Crust](#) come to room temperature, about 5 to 7 minutes before rolling out. On a lightly floured surface, roll out round disk to 1/8-inch thickness and larger than the circumference of your 9-inch pie dish. Gently fold into quarters and transfer to the pie dish. Trim excess with scissors or a knife along the rim and place pie dish in the fridge.
3. Leftover dough from the bottom crust can be used for decorative cut outs in the shape of leaves and flowers. I prefer to use two different leaf shapes when possible. It may be necessary to roll a bit thinner and chill in the freezer for a few minutes. Dust each side of chilled leftover dough before using pie cutters

or cookie cutters to cut out shapes. Lay them in a single layer on a quarter sheet pan dusted with flour, lay parchment paper between layers of pastry as needed. Place cut outs in the freezer.

4. Remove second piece of pie dough from fridge and let come to room temperature before rolling to 1/8-inch thickness. To make this design, it is preferred if dough is pre-shaped into a rectangular. Use a ruler to cut long strips for the lattice work. To re-create my design, you will need a mix of braids using either narrow or wide strips. Work quickly to prevent the dough from getting warm, chill dough in fridge to firm up when necessary. After cutting enough strips, use leftover scraps for more cut outs; transfer to the chilled sheet pan with other cut outs. Place lattice strips and braids on a separate sheet pan, chill in the fridge until you are ready for final assembly; avoid the freezer as strips may become too stiff to handle later.
5. In a large mixing bowl, fold pears, lemon zest (sometimes I zest the entire lemon for extra flavor), juice of 1 lemon, 1/4 cup sugar, tapioca flour, cinnamon, vanilla extract and sea salt. In a small bowl beat 1 egg with 1 tablespoon heavy cream. Set aside.
6. For the final assembly, add even layer of 1/4 cup caramel at room temperature into chilled pie crust. If caramel is too thick to handle, warm on low heat, just enough to loosen but not too hot that it will melt the pastry. Layer half of the pear mixture in an even layer, top with 1/4 cup caramel, layer remaining pears and drizzle about 1/8 cup caramel. Scatter frozen butter cubes evenly all over the top layer. If time permits, chill pie in fridge or freezer for 10 minutes. NOTE: There will be some leftover caramel, keep in fridge for a few weeks or drizzle warm caramel over each slice when serving.
7. Apply a very thin layer of egg wash around the rim of the pie using a small pastry brush, it will act as glue. Remove lattice pieces from fridge and bring to room temperature for a few minutes to prevent breakage. Begin lattice work by lightly arranging each element to create your design. When you're satisfied, trim the edges with scissors or a sharp paring knife. Begin to lift each piece alternatively to create the lattice and press down lightly along the rim to seal edges. For a traditional lattice layout, create 90° angles, but for an argyle arrangement try 45° angles.
8. To complete the design, add a leaf and floral wreath border. Brush the back of the leaf cut outs one at a time with egg wash to secure and place in a random pattern or alternate directions. Use a variety of flower shapes if possible and nestle them into the leaves trying not to cover up too much of the lattice work. For visual interest you can stack different sized flowers on top of each other. However be cautious to create too many layers as the pie thickness will affect the taste. Place pie in freezer preferable to the fridge to chill pastry, minimum of 20 minutes.
9. Preheat oven to 425°F, with a pizza stone or [Baking Steel](#) on middle rack if possible. Just before baking, gently brush the pastry with a thin even layer of egg wash all over, avoid pooling. If any pieces become loose, glue them down with a small dab of egg wash. Place pie on a rimmed sheet pan and loosely tent entire pie with foil avoiding contact with the pie. Bake on the middle rack for 20 minutes. Reduce oven to 375°F and remove foil. Finish baking until filling is bubbling, and golden brown about 60 minutes more. Watch the pie carefully, rotate if necessary. Pro-tip, pie must be violently bubbling to ensure filling is cooked and bottom crust is crispy. Let pie cool completely before serving, minimum of 4 to 6 hours.