

french silk pie

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French Silk Pie

A whipped chocolate-butter mousse in a baked shell, set only by cold. Betty Cooper won the 1951 Pillsbury Bake-Off with it, and the original — raw eggs whipped with butter and sugar for a very long time — is the reason the pie has a reputation for being both extraordinary and slightly dangerous.

The modern version cooks the eggs and loses nothing.

What makes it work

- **Cook the eggs and sugar to 71 °C over a bain-marie.** Five to seven minutes of whisking. This pasteurises them and, more usefully, dissolves the sugar completely so the filling is not gritty.
- **Whip the butter alone until white**, then add the cooled egg mixture a spoonful at a time. Adding it fast breaks the emulsion; if it splits, keep whipping and it usually comes back.
- **Whip for a long time — 10 minutes total.** The silk in the name is aeration. Under-whipped, it is a dense ganache; properly whipped, it is a mousse that holds a peak.
- **Everything the same temperature.** Cold egg mixture into soft butter curdles.
- **It sets by refrigeration only.** No starch, no gelatine, no bake.

Ingredients

One 23 cm pie. Serves 12 — very rich.

- 1 blind-baked shell — [all-butter pie crust](#)
- 4 [eggs](#)
- 250 g granulated sugar
- 200 g dark chocolate, 60%, melted and cooled — see [Chocolates](#)
- 280 g unsalted butter, softened
- 4 g fine salt
- 2 tsp vanilla — see [Pure vanilla extract](#)
- 1 tsp instant espresso powder, optional

Topping: 300 ml double cream · 30 g powdered sugar · chocolate curls

Method

Blind bake and cool the shell completely.

Whisk the eggs and sugar in a heatproof bowl over simmering water, constantly, until the mixture reaches **71 °C** and is thick and pale — about six minutes. Take it off and cool to room temperature, whisking occasionally.

Whip the butter with the salt for five minutes, until white and light.

Add the cooled egg mixture two tablespoons at a time, whipping continuously. Then add the melted chocolate, vanilla and espresso powder, and whip a further five minutes until it is pale, thick and holds a soft peak.

Spread into the shell and refrigerate at least four hours.

Top with whipped cream and curls before serving.

Notes

- **If it splits**, the butter and egg mixture were at different temperatures. Warm the bowl briefly over hot water and keep whipping.
- Take the pie out of the fridge 20 minutes before serving; straight from cold the butter is firm and the texture is lost.
- **Keeps four days refrigerated** and freezes for a month.

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