

pecan pie

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Pecan Pie

Pecans set in a sugar-syrup custard. It is a Southern American pie and a comparatively recent one — recipes appear from the 1890s and it became widespread after Karo corn syrup put the recipe on its label in the 1930s, which is why the standard version calls for corn syrup by brand.

Corn syrup is not required. What is required is an invert sugar that will not crystallise.

What makes it work

- **An invert sugar of some kind.** Corn syrup, golden syrup, [honey](#), [maple syrup](#) or [molasses](#) — all resist crystallisation. Straight granulated sugar and water will grain.
- **It is a custard, so it can curdle.** Bake at 160 °C, and pull it when the centre still wobbles. A pecan pie baked until firm is a rubbery one.
- **Toast the pecans first**, 8 minutes at 175 °C. Untoasted, they taste faintly of cardboard against all that sugar.
- **Blind bake the shell.** This filling is very wet and very heavy.
- **Salt and something bitter.** 5 g of salt and 2 tablespoons of bourbon, or a tablespoon of vinegar, keep it from being merely sweet. This is the difference between a good pecan pie and a cloying one.
- **The nuts float.** Pour the filling in first and lay the halves on top, or just stir them in and accept the natural layer that forms.

Ingredients

One 23 cm pie. Serves 10 — it is very rich.

- 1 blind-baked shell — [all-butter pie crust](#)
- 250 g pecan halves, toasted
- 200 g golden syrup, corn syrup or [maple syrup](#)
- 150 g dark brown sugar
- 100 g unsalted butter, melted
- 3 [eggs](#)
- 5 g fine salt
- 2 tsp vanilla — see [Pure vanilla extract](#)
- 2 tbsp bourbon, optional
- 1 tbsp cider vinegar

Method

Blind bake the shell. Reduce the oven to **160 °C / 325 °F**.

Whisk the syrup, brown sugar, melted butter, salt, vanilla, bourbon and vinegar until smooth. Whisk in the eggs one at a time — beat as little as possible, since air in the filling makes it puff and then sink.

Scatter two-thirds of the pecans in the shell, pour the filling over, and arrange the remaining halves on top.

Bake **45–55 minutes**, until the edges are set and the centre wobbles as one mass. It should read **77 °C** at the centre.

Cool completely, at least four hours. It sets as it cools.

Notes

- **Chocolate pecan pie:** 150 g of chopped dark chocolate scattered in the shell first. See [Chocolates](#).
- **Maple and walnut** is the northern variation and is less sweet; see [walnuts](#) and [Maple syrup](#).
- **Keeps four days** at room temperature, covered, and freezes for two months.
- Karo-style pies with 350 g of syrup are sweeter still; this version is deliberately pulled back.

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