



## Banana Peanut Butter Cream Pie

8 servings

Hands on: 1 hour

Total time: 2 hours

Get ready to pull out all the stops --- and many of your kitchen tools. You'll need 8 3 1/2-inch fluted tart shells or one 9-inch pie pan, a rolling pin, a saucepan, a strainer, a whisk, a double boiler and a candy thermometer to execute this recipe. Parchment paper, a stand mixer with whisk attachment, a pastry bag with large star tip and a kitchen propane torch will come in handy, too --- although they aren't absolutely necessary.

For the pastry

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup shortening

1/4 cup ice-cold water

For the vanilla cream

2 cups heavy whipping cream

1/2 vanilla bean

1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch

3 tablespoons water

2/3 cup granulated sugar

6 large egg yolks (reserve whites for meringue)

For the meringue

6 large egg whites

1 1/2 cups granulated sugar

For the tarts or pie

1/2 cup Skippy creamy peanut butter

2 bananas, sliced 1/4 inch thick

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

To prepare the pastry: Sift the flour, sugar and salt together in a mound. Using your fingers, crumble the shortening into the flour mixture until the shortening is in pea-size pieces. Make a well in middle of the mixture and add the water; mix until the dough just comes together. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 5 minutes. Roll the dough out on a floured surface (or between 2 pieces of parchment paper) to about 1/8-inch thickness. Use a 4-inch ring cutter to cut out 8 circles, and line the bottom and sides of the tart pans. (Alternately, use the whole sheet of rolled pastry to line a 9-inch pie pan. Freeze for 10 minutes. Line the pastry with foil and fill with dry beans; bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown.)

To prepare the vanilla cream: Place the cream and vanilla bean in a heavy saucepan and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and let the bean steep for 30 minutes, then scrape the seeds from the bean. Prepare an ice bath by nesting a dry bowl inside another bowl that is filled partway with ice water. In a small bowl or cup, stir together the cornstarch and water and set aside. Stir 2/3 cup sugar into the cream and return to a boil. Whisk a small amount of the hot cream into the egg yolks, and then whisk the yolk mixture back into the cream. Whisk the cornstarch mixture into the cream. Cook until the mixture is thick and just starts to bubble on the sides, about 2 minutes. Pour it through the strainer into the bowl set in the ice bath. Let the vanilla cream cool to room temperature, stirring a couple of times to bring the temperature down quickly. Refrigerate until needed.

To make the meringue: Place the egg whites and sugar into the top of a double boiler set over boiling water. Whisk the mixture until the sugar is dissolved and the temperature of the egg whites reaches 165 degrees. Pour the hot whites into the bowl of a mixer with a whisk attachment and whip on high speed until the meringue is thick, stiff and cooled to about room temperature. Place the meringue in a pastry bag with a star tip.

To assemble the tarts: Spread equal amounts of peanut butter into the tart shells. Arrange the sliced bananas on top of the peanut butter. Fill the shell to the top with the vanilla cream. Pipe large stars of meringue in concentric circles over the surface of the vanilla cream. (Alternately, mound the meringue over the vanilla cream and smooth with a flat spatula.) If desired, brown the meringue with a propane torch.

Per serving: 805 calories (percent of calories from fat, 52), 13 grams protein, 87 grams carbohydrates, 2 grams fiber,

47 grams fat (20 grams saturated), 241 milligrams

cholesterol, 279 milligrams sodium.