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No Pecans in This Pecan Pie!

By Joyce Moseley Pierce

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No Pecans in this Pecan Pie! (618 words)
by: Joyce Moseley Pierce

I used to think I was the only one who liked the gooey filling in pecan pie but hated the pecans on top. That all changed when one of my co-workers commented one day that he, too, hated picking through the pecans to get to the good stuff.

For his birthday, I decided my contribution to the birthday treat table would be a pecan-free pecan pie. I got out my trusty Betty Crocker cookbook and looked up "Pecan Pie." I considered just baking it and leaving the pecans out, but was delighted to find a "Coconut-Oatmeal Pie." Having seen pecan pies before and marveled at the craftsmanship involved in arranging all of those pecan halves on the top made me wonder how I would ever place those tiny pieces of coconut and oatmeal on the top of this pie without using tweezers!

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Not being one who generally reads the entire recipe before plowing right into it, you can imagine my delight when I got to the part that said to "stir in coconut and oatmeal." I paced around the oven anticipating how it would all come together and to my surprise, magic occurred! The coconut and oatmeal joined during baking to form a beautiful crisp, lacey topping.

Not having the option of tasting the pie before I paraded it through the halls to place it on the birthday table, I could only hope that it would be pleasing to all who might try it. As it ended up,

I didn't have to worry about anyone but the birthday boy! He liked it so well that after one piece he sneaked it off to his office and either gorged on it for the rest of the day or took it home with him that night. All I know is that I didn't have to take a dirty pie pan home with me! It was returned to me clean a few days days later.

If there are any of you who share my aversion to the combination of pecans and the sweet, gooey filling, here's the recipe. It comes straight from the Better Homes and Gardens New Cookbook. My copy is the Tenth Edition.

By the way – it's not that I don't like pecans, but for me it's a texture issue. I can eat nuts by the bushel as long as you don't throw them into something that doesn't require chewing!

Coconut–Oatmeal Pie:

3 eggs
1 cup corn syrup
2/3 cup sugar
1/3 cup margarine or butter, melted
1 tsp vanilla
3/4 cup coconut
1/2 cup quick–cooking rolled oats

For filling, in a mixing bowl beat eggs lightly with a rotary beater or a fork till combined. Stir

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in corn syrup, sugar, margarine or butter, and vanilla.
Stir well. Stir in coconut and oats.

Place a pastry-lined 9-inch pie plate on the oven rack. Pour the filling into the pastry-lined pie plate. Cover edge of pie with foil. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 25 minutes.

Remove foil; bake for 20 to 25 minutes more or till a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool pie on a wire rack. Cover and chill to store. Makes 8 servings.

I might mention that if you actually like pecans or other nuts on your pie here are a couple of other variations.

Maple Pecan Pie: Prepare as above, except substitute

maple syrup or maple-flavored syrup for the corn syrup.

Peanut Pie: Prepare as above, except substitute coarsely chopped peanuts, macadamia nuts, or cashews for the pecans.

Pecan Pie: Prepare as above, except substitute pecan halves. Believe it or not, they do rise to the top of the pie!

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Texas Pecan Treats

By Phyllis Staff

Come August, there is nowhere I'd rather NOT be than in Texas. Steamy, sultry, and hot, living in Texas in August is like trying to breathe in a tightly-covered pressure cooker.

But in November, I remember the joys of Texas. Cool breezes and balmy fall days refresh the senses and invite us outside once again. On streets and in parks, pecans are ripe for gathering and shelling.

No Pecans in This Pecan Pie!

Those of you who think pecans come in 6-ounce plastic supermarket packages have missed the true texture and flavor of a real Texas treat. Best of all are the small native pecans with shells like granite. But once you've cracked them, there are no better fall treats to be had.

With the holidays rapidly approaching, we want to share a couple of our favorite recipes using Texas pecans. Even if you're forced to use those supermarket replicas, these recipes are great!

Texas Pecan Pie

Prepare a pie shell and set aside, or use a premade pie shell.

1/3 cup butter

3/4 cup brown sugar, firmly packed

3 whole eggs

one cup light corn syrup

one cup broken pecans

one tsp vanilla

1/4 tsp salt

Cream butter, sugar, and eggs.

Stir in corn syrup, pecans, vanilla and salt.

Pour mixture into prepared pie shell. Spraying the pie pan with PAM or a similar no-stick spray before placing pie shell can help keep the pastry crisp.

Bake in 375 degree oven for 30-40 minutes, or until just set in center. Cool completely before serving.

Back in the eighties, I spent an unforgettable Christmas with my daughter who was, at the time, studying in Kyoto, Japan. Because of her love of pecan cookies, I made a double batch to take with me, fully aware that taking foodstuffs into Japan was not allowed. I figured I might lose the cookies, but what the heck? I might get lucky and sneak them past customs.

Arriving in Japan after a 26-hour flight, I was confronted with a Japanese customs agent who went through everything in my luggage. Nothing was too small or insignificant to escape his scrutiny. When he came to the tin of tightly packed cookies, he eyed it with a quizzical expression.

"Desu ka (what's this)?" he questioned me.

In my best schoolgirl Japanese, I explained that this was a Christmas present for my daughter, hoping that he would go on to the next item. It was not to be.

As I watched in horror, he opened the tin and was immediately enveloped by a dense cloud of powdered sugar.

"Ah," he announced. "Clismas plesant!" And beaming, he clapped the lid back on the tin and waved me through.

He was right. The holidays just wouldn't be as pleasant without these pecan gems.

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Holiday Pecan Cookies

Beat until soft ½ cup butter.

Blend in two tablespoons sugar.

Add one teaspoon vanilla, one cup ground pecan meats, and one cup cake flour or regular flour sifted several times.

Roll into 32 ½ inch balls, one teaspoon full at a time.

Place on greased baking sheet. Bake in 300 degree oven for 45 minutes or 375 for 25 minutes. While cookies are still hot, roll in confectioner's sugar. Roll again after cookies cool.

Stored in air-tight tins, these cookies will keep indefinitely.

Enjoy!

Phyllis Staff, Ph.D. – Phyllis Staff is an experimental psychologist and the CEO of The Best Is Yet.Net, an internet company that helps seniors and caregivers find trustworthy residential care. She is the author of *How to Find Great Senior Housing: A Roadmap for Elders and Those Who Love Them*. She is also the daughter of a victim of Alzheimer's disease. Visit her website at

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THE PECAN PIE

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