
THE BARRY TART

The first time I made this tart as a recipe for my newspaper column I thought it was really very good. Just to be sure, I asked a close friend to taste it and give me an opinion. He dubbed it a "Hall of Fame" dessert, and then proceeded to consume the entire thing in twenty-four hours—an act that merits his name on the recipe.

This combination of chocolate, pecans, caramel, and chocolate pastry also has been a commercial success. When I was the menu consultant for Tavern on the Green restaurant in New York, I gave the recipe to the pastry chef, and it quickly became the restaurant's number-one dessert. Needless to say, I have served it at home with spectacular results.

The preparation is lengthy, since the tart must be made in advance and frozen before the topping is added. However, it keeps perfectly in the freezer for up to a month.

Should the finished tart be difficult to slice (which happens occasionally if the caramel is overcooked), the solution is to use a large knife that has been rinsed with hot running water and wiped dry.

The tart is pictured in the color section. The garnish is created by placing cardboard strips over the plate to make a triangle in the center, then sifting cocoa through a small strainer over the open area.

FLEXIBLE MENU SUGGESTIONS

This tart is included in menus based on Capretto with Lemon and Rosemary (page 246), Mushroom and Prosciutto-Stuffed Chicken Breasts (page 274), and Cognac-Marinated Beef Fillet (page 298). It is interchangeable with Chocolate Macadamia Torte (page 374) or Chocolate Truffle Cake (page 382). *Makes an 11-inch tart*

PREPARATION: 1 HOUR

BAKING: 40 TO 50 MINUTES

FREEZING: 6 HOURS TO 1 MONTH

CRUST

1 1/4 cups unbleached flour
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 tablespoons powdered sugar
1/4 pound frozen unsalted butter, cubed
1/4 cup ice water
Flour

FILLING AND TOPPING

6 ounces semisweet chocolate
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup strong brewed coffee
1/4 cup whipping cream
14 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 eggs, separated
5 ounces (1 1/4 cups) shelled pecans
1 cup granulated light brown sugar
Salt
6 tablespoons whipping cream
3 tablespoons dark rum

1. For the crust, combine flour, cocoa, and sugar in a dry food processor fitted with the metal blade. Process to mix the ingredients. Add the butter and process until it completely disappears and mixture takes on a sandy texture. Add the ice water and pulse until the dough begins to clump.
2. Gather dough into a flat disk and gently roll it, on a generously floured surface, into a 14-inch circle. Transfer the circle of dough to an 11-inch fluted tart pan with removable bottom. Ease the dough into the pan and fit it snugly around the bottom edge and against the sides of the pan. Trim off excess dough and freeze for 15 minutes.
3. Adjust oven rack to lowest position. Heat oven to 375 degrees. Line the dough with aluminum foil and add pie weights or rice. Bake 30 to 35 minutes. Remove weights and foil. Bake 5 to 7 minutes longer; set aside to cool.
4. For the filling, use a cleaver or large knife to chop the chocolate coarsely. (Or, cut chocolate into ½-inch pieces and grind it in a food processor fitted with the metal blade.) Set aside.
5. In a small saucepan, mix the sugar, coffee, and cream. Heat to simmering, stirring frequently. Add 6 tablespoons of the butter and stir over low heat until it melts. Put the egg yolks in a food processor fitted with the metal blade. With the motor on, quickly pour in the hot coffee cream. Add the chocolate and process until it is smooth; cover the chocolate mixture and set aside; do not refrigerate.
6. Coarsely chop the pecans. Wrap and reserve ¾ cup for the top of the tart; set the remainder aside.
7. Heat ½ cup of the brown sugar with a pinch of salt and 4 tablespoons butter in a small saucepan, stirring until sugar dissolves. Add 3 tablespoons of the cream and 1½ tablespoons rum. Heat to boiling and simmer just until the caramel turns a rich amber and thickens slightly, about 5 minutes.
8. Immediately pour the hot caramel into the tart shell, spreading it evenly over the crust with the back of a spoon. Sprinkle the pecans evenly over the caramel. Freeze the tart for 5 minutes.
9. In a clean dry bowl, whip egg whites to firm peaks with electric beaters or a whisk. Fold egg whites thoroughly into the chocolate filling. Put the filling over the caramel layer in the tart and smooth the top. Cover and freeze until it is solid, about 6 hours. (Can remove frozen tart from the pan, transfer it to a cardboard cake round, double-wrap, and freeze 1 month, together with the chopped pecans for the topping.)
10. For the caramel and nut topping, repeat step 7, using the remaining sugar, salt, butter, cream, and rum. Remove the pan ring and put the frozen tart on a sheet of oiled aluminum foil. Pour the hot caramel over the top of the tart, working quickly to spread it evenly. Immediately sprinkle the reserved pecans over the caramel.
11. Refrigerate the tart until the caramel is firm and the tart defrosts, about 2 hours (can cover loosely and refrigerate 3 days). Unless the kitchen is very hot, let the tart stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before slicing.