



Mini Chocolate Almond Pies

These luxurious tarts are simple to make and worthy of the pastry case at your favorite bakery. A swirl of whipped cream and sprinkle of toasted almonds makes them look as good as they taste.

SUGAR COOKIE SHELLS

1 box Sugar Cookie Mix prepared as directed on box but not chilled

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE FILLING

2 cups (454g) heavy cream

1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Almond Emulsion

3 tablespoons (37g) granulated sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cups (168g) Sweet Ground Chocolate & Cocoa Blend

WHIPPED CREAM

1 teaspoon Instant ClearJel

1 tablespoon sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cups (340g) heavy cream, cold

1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract

Toasted sliced almonds for garnish

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

For the cookie shells: Divide the dough into 12 equal pieces (1 scant muffin scoop), round into balls, and flatten each ball into a disc $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. Set half the disks aside, covered. Place a disk of dough in each well of a Mini Pie Pan. Cover the dough with plastic or a parchment square. Use the outside of a flat-bottomed measuring cup to press the dough into the bottom and up the sides of each well to the top; if using

plastic, remove it and line the dough with foil; if using parchment, just leave it in place.

Fill each well with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar or pie weights. Bake for 18 minutes, until the sides are set. Take the pan out of the oven and remove the liners and sugar or weights. Return to the oven for 6 more minutes, until the bottoms of the shells are light golden brown.

Remove from the oven and while still hot run a thin blade around the edges of the shells to free them from the pan. Set a timer for 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, remove the shells from the pan and transfer to a rack to cool. Repeat with the remaining disks of dough.

For the filling: Combine all of the ingredients in a large mixing bowl; whip until the mousse forms and holds a stiff peak.

To assemble: Scoop a generous $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the prepared mousse into each shell and use a small offset spatula to smooth the top.

For the whipped cream: In a small bowl, stir together the ClearJel and sugar; set aside. Whip the heavy cream until it begins to thicken and you can see the tracks from the whisk in it. Beat in the vanilla and the ClearJel/sugar mixture; whip until the cream holds medium peaks. Pipe or spoon the whipped cream over the mousse; sprinkle with toasted sliced almonds before serving.

Yield: 12 mini pies



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