

A man with a beard and a dark shirt is focused on preparing a dish. He is pouring sesame seeds from a small glass jar into a white bowl with a blue floral pattern. The bowl contains a dark, saucy protein, possibly chicken, topped with sliced green onions. He is wearing a patterned apron. The background is a brick wall with a framed piece of quilted fabric. In the foreground, on a wooden cutting board, there is a large knife, a small ceramic pitcher with a dark liquid, and a small black bowl containing green onions.

SOUTHERN » COOKING GLOBAL « FLAVORS

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Chocolate-Bourbon Pecan Pie

My parents always had fresh, unshelled mixed nuts out on the table along with a cracker. It was a snack I found in every household I entered growing up in Cleveland. Pecan pie is a traditional Southern dessert, but in Kentucky, they add chocolate and bourbon. The variety of spices in this dish, including Chinese five-spice powder, is what makes this pie unique. Fire-spice powder is a combination of cinnamon, star anise, fennel seed, Sichuan pepper, and cloves, creating a complex blend, which, combined with chocolate and bourbon, provides layers of flavor in each bite.

INGREDIENTS

MAKES TWO (9-INCH) PIES

FOR THE PIE FILLING

- 1 cup (2 sticks) salted butter
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1½ cups cane syrup, preferably Alaga
- 1 cup honey
- ½ cup molasses
- 1 tablespoon Chinese five-spice powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- ¼ cup bourbon
- ¼ cup self-rising flour
- 6 large eggs

FOR THE PIE DOUGH

- 5 cups self-rising flour, plus more for dusting
- ½ cup (1 stick) salted butter
- ½ cup vegetable shortening
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup ice-cold water

FOR THE PIE

- 4 cups whole pecans
- 2 cups bittersweet chocolate chips

FOR THE BUILD

- Powdered sugar, for dusting

DIRECTIONS

Make the Filling

1. Put the butter and brown sugar in a medium saucepan and cook on medium heat, stirring, until the butter and sugar melt. Continue to stir and cook until the sugar caramelizes.
2. Add the cane syrup, honey, and molasses to the butter-sugar mixture and cook on medium-high heat for 10 minutes, stirring often.
3. Off the heat, add the Chinese five-spice powder, cinnamon, vanilla, bourbon, flour, and eggs. Puree the mixture with a handheld stick blender until smooth. Alternatively, whisk by hand.
4. Reserve until ready to use. (The filling can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.)

Make the Pie Dough

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, thoroughly mix the flour, butter, shortening, and sugar. With the mixer running, slowly pour in the ice-cold water.
2. Once the dough forms, transfer it to a clean work surface lightly dusted with flour. Dust the dough with flour, then knead until it comes together. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and let it rest for 10 minutes.
3. Divide the dough in half and flatten each half into a disc. Add more flour to your work surface.
4. Use a rolling pin to roll out each dough disc to cover a nine-inch pie plate, or about $\frac{1}{16}$ inch thick.
5. Gently lift the dough circles and fit them into the pie pans, lining the bottoms and sides. Pinch or crimp the edges with a fork, then prick the bottom with a fork.
6. Line both pie shells with parchment paper and fill with dried baking beans. Rest the pie shells for 15 minutes before baking. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
7. Bake the pie shells for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and remove the parchment paper with baking beans. Reserve the pie shells until ready to fill.

Make the Pie

1. Place 2 cups of the pecans and 1 cup of the chocolate chips into each pie crust. Divide the filling between the pie shells.
2. Bake the pies for 20 minutes, then rotate and cook for another 15 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of each pie comes out clean. Allow the pies to cool.

The Build

Cut a wedge of pie and dust with powdered sugar. Plate the remaining servings.

