Festive Banoffee Pie

There's something about the combination of buttery cookies, rich dulce de leche, fresh bananas, and fluffy whipped cream that feels like pure comfort. Give it a little holiday magic with the warm spice and crunch of crushed gingersnaps and a few adorable gingerbread men, and you've got yourself a dessert made for gathering around the table. It's cozy, indulgent, surprisingly easy to make, and even better when made ahead.

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 10 minutes
Chill Time: 2–4 hours
Servings: 8–10

Allow an additional 1½–2 hours if making homemade dulce de leche.

Ingredients

Cookie Crust

- 200g (7 oz or about 1.5 sleeves) Maria cookies
- ½ cup + 1 tbsp (125g) unsalted butter, melted
- Additional butter for greasing the measuring cup

Filling & Whipped Cream Topping

- 400g (14 oz) dulce de leche (homemade or store-bought)
- 3 medium ripe bananas, sliced
- 1 pint (2 cups) heavy whipping cream, divided
- 1–2 tbsp powdered sugar (optional)

Festive Garnish

- ½ cup roughly crushed gingersnap cookies
- Mini gingerbread men or gingerbread mug toppers

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

2. Add the Maria cookies to a blender or food processor and blend until finely ground. Combine with the melted butter until the mixture resembles wet sand.

3. Transfer the cookie mixture to a 9-inch pie dish. Lightly butter the bottom and sides of a measuring cup and use it to firmly press the crumbs into the bottom and up the sides of the dish.

4. Bake for 8–12 minutes, until lightly golden and fragrant. Set aside to cool completely.

5. In a mixing bowl, combine the dulce de leche with a small splash of heavy whipping cream. Mix until smooth and creamy. The cream helps mellow the sweetness of the dulce de leche.

6. Slice the bananas into rounds and gently fold them into the dulce de leche mixture until evenly coated. Transfer the filling to the cooled crust and spread into an even layer.

7. Using a hand mixer or stand mixer, whip the remaining cold heavy cream until stiff peaks form. I prefer to leave my whipped cream unsweetened to balance the sweetness of the dulce de leche and allow the natural sweetness of the bananas to shine, but feel free to add powdered sugar if desired.

8. Spread the whipped cream evenly over the banana filling. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2–4 hours, or until set.

9. Just before serving, roughly crush the gingersnaps and sprinkle them generously over the whipped cream. Decorate with mini gingerbread men for an extra festive touch.

10. Slice, serve chilled, and enjoy!

How to Make Homemade Dulce de Leche

Making your own dulce de leche is surprisingly simple. All you need is a can of sweetened condensed milk and a little patience!

Ingredients

- 1 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk

Stovetop Method

1. Pour the sweetened condensed milk into the top of a double boiler or a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water. Make sure the bottom of the bowl doesn't touch the water.

2. Cover and cook over medium-low heat for approximately 1½–2 hours, stirring occasionally.

3. Keep an eye on the water level throughout the cooking process, replenishing with hot water as needed.

4. Once the condensed milk has thickened and developed a rich, golden caramel color, remove it from the heat and whisk until smooth. Cook a little longer if needed to achieve your desired consistency.

5. Allow it to cool before using it in the pie.

Safety Note: While simmering an unopened can of sweetened condensed milk is a traditional method, using a double boiler is a safer alternative that avoids the risk of pressure building inside the can.

Tips & Notes

- **Homemade or store-bought dulce de leche:** Both work beautifully, so use whichever is most convenient for you.
- **Heavy cream:** You only need one pint of heavy whipping cream for this recipe. Use a small splash in the dulce de leche and whip the rest for the topping. You want to mellow the sweetness without making the filling too loose.
- **Unsweetened whipped cream:** The dulce de leche and bananas bring plenty of sweetness on their own. Leaving the whipped cream unsweetened helps balance the richness of the pie.
- **Make ahead:** This is a wonderful dessert to prepare the night before and refrigerate overnight, especially when you're hosting for the holidays.
- **Keep it crunchy:** Wait until just before serving to add the crushed gingersnaps and gingerbread men so they don't soften.
- **Make it year-round:** Swap the gingersnaps and gingerbread men for a light dusting of cinnamon for a more traditional banoffee pie.

Storage

Store covered in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Best enjoyed within the first 1–2 days.