Strawberry Meringue Pie Alla Lido

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients

- 12 two-inch-square saltine crackers (unsalted tops)
- 3 egg whites, at room temperature
- 1/4 tsp cream of tartar
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 bar (4 oz) sweet cooking chocolate
- 1 Tbsp butter or margarine
- 4 cups hulled strawberries
- 1 cup heavy cream, whipped with 2 Tbsp confectioners' sugar

Instructions

1. With a rolling pin, coarsely crush crackers in a plastic food bag.
2. Sprinkle 2 tablespoons of cracker crumbs on the bottom of a well-greased 9-inch pie plate; reserve remaining crumbs.
3. In a small deep bowl, beat egg whites until foamy; add cream of tartar and salt. Beat until soft peaks form.
4. Gradually beat in granulated sugar 1 tablespoon at a time, beating until very stiff and sugar is completely dissolved.
5. Beat in vanilla just until blended.
6. Fold in pecans and remaining cracker crumbs.
7. With a spatula, spread meringue mixture over bottom and up sides of prepared pie plate, pushing up sides slightly above rim of pie plate to form a shell.
8. Bake in a preheated 325°F oven for 30 minutes or until golden and hard to the touch.
9. Cool on a wire rack (shell will crack slightly on cooling).
10. In a small saucepan over low heat, melt chocolate with butter; stir to blend.
11. With a metal spoon, drizzle chocolate mixture all over cooled meringue shell; let set at least 15 minutes.
12. Reserving 2 whole strawberries for garnish, cut remaining berries in half, larger ones in quarters. Spoon into pie shell.
13. Top with dollops of whipped cream or cream piped through a pastry bag.
14. Garnish with the 2 reserved whole berries.
15. Chill until serving time. Best served same day; cut in wedges to serve (pie will crumble slightly).

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