

Butter My Biscuit

Food musings of a southern ex-pat



Derby Bites: Derby Bourbon Tassies



All Derby meals need some sweets to round out the day's festivities. For many, the dessert of choice is "Derby Pie," or some close facsimile thereof. Please note, Derby-Pie® is trademarked (a little more on that in a bit), and the only means to that particular pie is to order direct from [Kern's Kitchen](#). For the masses who don't want to pay the Kern's premium price but want the taste, you must utilize one of the facsimile recipes that abound ? which is fine by me. In fact, I've taken it to a different format, and propose that the perfect finger dessert is what I'm dubbing "**Derby Bourbon Tassies**." I'm hoping most readers will be able to discern what a 'tassie' is. But should you be a know not, then fear not. The term is a derivative of an old French word "tasset," or what is a small pouch or cup. In the baking world, that translates into a tiny pastry cup that is filled with something like pecan filling, lemon curd, a custard or other fruit fillings; in fact, most bakers consider it a type of cookie. I happen to LOVE tassies (love, love). On the few occasions my mother would make her 'pecan cups' (usually a ladies' luncheon ? not for the kids), I gobbled however many I could get away with! Even more appealing is that tassies are not just sweet fare, but make fabulous savory appetizers as well with perfect fillings being pimento cheese, crab salad, and sauteed mushrooms to name a few.

So what's the deal with this trademarked Derby-Pie®? The history lesson here goes something like this: what is now known as Derby-Pie® was invented some 50+ years ago as a specialty item at The Melrose Inn, located in Prospect, Kentucky. Then manager George Kern was the driver behind the secret recipe, with assistance from his parents. It was officially named after the family members tossed names into a hat; 'Derby Pie' was the slip that was drawn. The recipe is a guarded secret, and that chocolate nut pie is now a famously trademarked item too ? one that is vigorously policed by Kern Kitchens and its attorneys to this day. Hence, nobody can call the pie "Derby Pie," which just frustrates the hell out of folks.

But as I said, that's alright by me. There are a plethora of look-a-like recipes out there that try to capture the specialness of the Derby-Pie®. You might see titles such as: Kentucky Bourbon Pie, Kentucky Nut Pie, Run for the Roses Pie, Pegasus Pie, etc. The basic formula is a blend of chocolate and nuts (walnuts or pecans) that go into a pie shell, along with a brown sugar, butter and egg filling similar to that of pecan pie. Some recipes add a touch of bourbon, others don't. Do I liquor up my tassies? Absolutely! My nut cups get bourbonized, big time ...

Recipe provided by <http://www.buttermybiscuit.com>

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Unlike most of my posts, the recipe below is not from a known culinary entity. It was just me playing in the kitchen, and quite



BEVERAGE? So how do you wash these little bites down? Interesting question. If it weren't the Derby, I'd say milk is the best option. But, that just won't do. Alas, the only answer is: bourbon! The fellows may not agree with my recommendation, but I'd suggest going with something a bit sophisticated on the bourbon front: like a specialty Manhattan, the kind served in a swanky martini glass. I usually drink bourbon neat, or with ginger ale as my winter liquor splurge. But every now and then, an uptown drink is rather appropriate. The beauty here is that these specialty Manhattans are not friends with pink Cosmopolitans, so I think they would be manly enough for those with an XY chromosome. My top picks are recipes found on the [Woodford Reserve](#) website (I am un-apologetically biased). They are the **Woodford Latte Manhattan** with bourbon, coffee liqueur, cream and a dash of Tuaca liqueur (an Italian brandy-based liqueur with orange and vanilla essence), or the **Woodford Bourbon Ball Manhattan** with bourbon, white creme de cacao and hazelnut liqueur. Either choice would allow the host with the most to prepare a pitcher of them ahead of time, then pour later. So kick back with a couple of tassies, and your bourbon Manhattan of choice. Southern hedonistic pleasure never tasted so good ...

"Derby Bourbon Tassies"

Dough Ingredients (adapted from [Martha Stewart's Pate Brisee](#))
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- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut in pieces
- ¼ to ½ cups ice water

Yield: 2 pie shells (or approximately 48 tassies)

Place the flour, salt and sugar in the bowl of a food processor, and process for a few seconds to combine. Add the butter, and process until the mixture resembles coarse meal, about 10 seconds. With the machine running, add the ice water in a slow, steady stream, through the feed tube just until the dough holds together. Do not process for more than 30 seconds.

Turn the dough out onto a work surface. Divide in two. Place each half on a sheet of plastic wrap. Flatten, and form two discs. Wrap, and refrigerate at least 1 hour before using. When ready to start assembling, pull dough out and start rolling into approximately 2" diameter balls. You should have approximately 24 or more balls per disc of dough; 48 plus for both. Press into 2, 24-cup mini muffin tins with the dough coming up the sides to the top. You want to use fingertips to smooth out the dough and create enough space for the filling.

Warning: due to so much butter, the dough will get very soft and melt on you as you work. You might want to keep one disc of dough in the fridge until done with the next, and minimize how much you handle the dough as you roll the balls and press into the tins. Note: There is no need to pre-bake the dough in this case, although for a true pie, you may want to blind bake for a bit.

Filling Ingredients

- 2 extra large eggs
- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 2/3 cup light brown sugar
- 1/3 cup white sugar
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup bourbon
- 6-8 ounces of chocolate (mini chips, chips or bars)
- 48± whole walnuts (or pecans)

Whisk together eggs, melted butter, sugars and flour in a bowl.

ASSEMBLY: With dough already pressed into the muffin cups, take bits of chocolate and place on the bottom of each muffin cup. If you use bars, then chop into small pieces so they can be layered appropriately. Next, take approximately a 1½ teaspoons of the filling and drop over the chocolate by teaspoon (sorry, by any other means and you'd have a flood of filling). The filling should come up a little over 3/4 of the cup. Finally, top with one large nut.

Bake in a preheated 325° oven for approximately 30-35 minutes until pastry edges are browned and filling is slightly puffed. Cool in pan for approximately 10 minutes, then you can usually lift out with fingertips rather easily (again, all that butter self greases the pan). If there is tension, simply run a knife around the edges and try again. Serve warm for a melted, gooey consistency, or cool and store in container for later use.

Personal Notes: Kudos to Martha for giving us a food processor recipe for a really great basic pie dough. Unfortunately, my food processor croaked a couple of weeks ago and I was stuck doing it the old fashioned way. If you too don't have one, all I did was freeze the sticks of butter for a couple of hours, then grate them on a box grater. Add to pre-chilled dry ingredients and then stir in the ice water. For me, I needed a few more Tbsp of water than the recipe called for .. perhaps due to geography, or perhaps I over measured my dry ingredients. You'll need to feel it out and work by intuition. And, if tassies

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aren't your thing here, use the same recipe but plunk into pie shell.

Once last note: if you'd rather leave out the bourbon, that's fine. I'd sub in a couple of teaspoons of vanilla extract and call it a day!

GHTime Code(s): [1fe05](#)

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