Blood Orange Halloween Pumpkin Pie

**Ingredients**

For the pastry

15g (½oz) pecan nuts

170g (5¾oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting

pinch salt

75g (2½oz) chilled unsalted butter, cut into cubes, plus extra for greasing

For the filling

3 large free-range eggs

300g (10½oz) pumpkin purée (available online and in the baking section of some large supermarkets)

85g (3oz) soft dark brown sugar

1½ tsp ground cinnamon

1½ blood oranges, zest of both and juice of one

125g (4½oz) evaporated milk

For the meringue

2 pasteurized egg whites

115g (4oz) caster sugar

25g (1oz) pecan nuts

For the syrup

50ml (2fl oz) blood orange juice (available in large supermarkets)

100g (3½fl oz) granulated sugar

**Directions**

Put all the pecan nuts for the pastry and the meringue in a food processor and blend until fine. Weigh out 15g (½oz) for the pastry and set aside the remainder.

For the pastry, add the flour, salt and butter to the food processor. Tip in the pecan nuts and pulse until the ingredients are combined and resemble breadcrumbs. Add a tablespoon of cold water and pulse again. Keep adding more water a tablespoon at a time until the mixture comes together as a dough.

Tip out the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead lightly until smooth. Wrap in film and refrigerate for 10–15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350F. Grease a 8in pie dish. For the filling, lightly beat the eggs in a large mixing bowl. Add the pumpkin purée, sugar, cinnamon, orange zest and juice. Beat until combined. Pour in the evaporated milk and then blend everything together using a handheld blender. Set aside.

Roll out the dough on a lightly floured work surface until ¼in thick. Line the pie dish with the pastry, taking care to push the pastry into the edges. Leave any excess overhanging and lightly prick the base using a fork (do not go through to the tin). Place on a baking tray.

Cover the pastry with baking paper and fill with ceramic baking beads or uncooked rice. Bake on the middle shelf for 10 minutes or until the pastry is dry. Remove from the oven and trim any excess pastry so that they are no higher than the pie tin.

Pour in the filling so that only 5mm/¼in of the pastry can be seen at the top.

Increase the oven temperature to 390F. Bake the pie in the centre of the oven for 15 minutes. Turn the oven down to 320F and bake for a further 30 minutes or until the filling is firm (a slight wobble in the center is fine).

For the meringue, put the egg whites in the bowl of a large freestanding mixer fitted with a whisk attachment (you can also use a mixing bowl and a hand mixer, but it is much easier and safer to add the syrup when you have both hands free). Place the sugar and 100ml (3½fl oz) water in a saucepan. Place over a low heat and use a sugar thermometer to measure the temperature of the syrup. When the syrup mixture reaches 210F, begin whisking the egg whites.

When the syrup reaches 240F, remove it from the heat. With the motor running, slowly pour the syrup down the side of the bowl into the mixer, taking care not to touch the whisk as it may splash. Continue to whisk until shiny and stiff peaks form when the whisk is removed.

Fold the reserved ground pecans into the meringue using a large metal spoon.

After baking, leave the pie to cool in the tin for 5 minutes. Spoon the meringue onto the pie and use a palette knife to smooth into a dome. Use a chef’s blowtorch to brown the top of the meringue.

For the syrup, combine the orange juice and sugar in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Measure the temperature using a sugar thermometer and when it reaches 240F remove it from the heat. To decorate the pie, dip a fork into the caramel and carefully drizzle over the pie in a cross-hatch pattern (melted sugar is very hot – take care not to burn yourself). Serve the pie warm.