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SAVOR



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PHOTOGRAPHER: DUANE TINKEY

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WRITER: WINI MORANVILLE

When was the last time you enjoyed a chocolate cream pie? Or more to the point, when was the last time you even craved one? Because let's face it: Somewhere along the line, thanks to bad influences like boxed pudding mixes, we've forgotten just how wonderful a well-made chocolate cream pie can be.

With this recipe, Eileen Gannon has once and for all given chocolate cream pie back its good name. Better yet, she's done so without complicating the recipe one whit. Hers is as easy as any pie you'd make with boxed pudding mix, but richer, silkier and infinitely more chocolaty.

The secret ingredient is Gannon's Sweet + Rich Chocolate Premium Dessert Sauce, one of three luxury chocolate sauces she unveiled last autumn via her newly launched food company, Sunday Night Foods.

Who is this sudden food maven? While Gannon might not have the name recognition among local food lovers of, say, chefs George Formaro and Joe Tripp, she is well known (and envied)

among competitive hobby bakers. She estimates she has won more than 600 food contests since she began competing in 1988. These include local smackdowns (including many ribbons—mostly blue—at the Iowa State Fair), as well as prestigious regional and national contests. She snagged first place in Seattle's Best Coffee's "Red Cup Showdown" for a pumpkin-pie spice and caramelized bacon coffee drink she titled "How to Win a Guy in Just One Sip." She's demonstrated her culinary chops nationally on ABC's "Good Morning America," the Discovery Family Channel's "Bake It Like a Buddy," and the Food Network's "Bakers vs. Fakers."

She accomplished all this while holding down high-pressure day jobs, including 15 years at Morgan Stanley and eight years at Workiva, a public software company from which she retired as a senior vice president in 2020.

Gannon first developed her sauce in 2018 and later worked with a Michelin-starred chef and a food co-packer in Pennsylvania to scale it commercially.

EILEEN
GANNON



She's dedicated to using only high-quality ingredients: sugar, heavy cream, butter, unsweetened chocolate (premium Guittard chocolate, no less), Dutch process cocoa, vanilla and salt. No stabilizers, preservatives or artificial flavors allowed. And no corn syrup.

The result is a lush and glossy sauce that's as elegant as it is decadent. While the sauce can provide an irresistible finishing touch to desserts like profiteroles, cakes, sundaes and crêpes, it also works as a jump-starter to other dessert recipes, from her prizewinning chocolate stout cakelets and chocolate-filled oatmeal bars, to brownies, tarts, fudge-filled cookies, chocolate martinis (see page 62), and more. Consider it a high-end convenience product for the discerning cook.

This Sunday Night Chocolate Cream Pie provides an unimaginably good example of the kind of magic Sunday Night sauces can bring to dessert recipes. Find more of Gannon's inspired (and often prizewinning) recipes on her website, sundaynightfoods.com.



SAVOR

SUNDAY NIGHT® CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE

Makes 8 servings

3 tablespoons cornstarch

1 1/2 cups milk

1 9.2-ounce jar Sunday Night brand Sweet + Rich Chocolate Premium Dessert Sauce, at room temperature

1 purchased or homemade 9-inch graham cracker crust

1 recipe Sunday Night Chocolate Whipped Cream or Sunday Night Sweetened Whipped Cream (see recipes, below)

Additional Sunday Night Sweet + Rich Chocolate Premium Dessert Sauce, at room temperature, for drizzling (optional)

Chocolate curls (optional)

1. For filling, place the cornstarch in a medium saucepan. Slowly whisk in the milk, whisking constantly to dissolve the cornstarch and prevent lumps. Cook, whisking constantly, over medium-low heat until mixture begins to thicken, about 10 minutes. The mixture should be thick enough to cover the back of a spoon but not boiling (steam will escape in puffy bubbles). Add the chocolate sauce; cook and stir for another 2 minutes or until the chocolate is fully incorporated and the mixture is quite thick. (If your pie filling looks a bit lumpy, pour it through a fine-mesh strainer before pouring into the pie crust.) Remove from heat and pour filling into the graham cracker crust. Loosely cover and refrigerate until cool and set, about 2 to 3 hours.

2. Using a large spoon, spread the whipped cream over the top of the pie. If you prefer a marbled effect in the topping, drizzle 2 tablespoons of chocolate sauce over the whipped cream and, using a large spoon, lightly marble the sauce with the whipped cream in large swirls. Garnish with chocolate curls if desired. Serve.

Sunday Night Chocolate Whipped Cream:

Spoon 1/4 cup Sunday Night Sweet + Rich Chocolate Premium Dessert Sauce, room temperature, into a mixer bowl. Stir in 1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form, being careful not to overbeat. If you prefer sweeter whipped cream, beat in 2 to 4 tablespoons powdered sugar.

Sunday Night Sweetened Whipped Cream:

Place 1 cup cold heavy whipping cream, 2 tablespoons granulated sugar or powdered sugar, and 1 teaspoon vanilla in a chilled mixer bowl. Beat with an electric mixer on medium-low just until the cream billows softly and curls when the beaters are lifted, being careful not to overbeat. (Tip: If you prefer the whipped cream a little stiffer, use a handheld whisk to whip it a few extra strokes.)



ALSO TRY ...

No time to make a pie? Serve Eileen Gannon's simple dessert-in-a-glass instead. Her version of the chocolate martini gets extra finesse thanks to Sunday Night Sweet + Rich Chocolate Premium Dessert Sauce. Note: Gannon says that while you could make this with vodka, she prefers the caramel flavor of golden rum with the chocolate.

Sunday Night® Chocolate-Rum Martini

For each cocktail:

2 tablespoons Sunday Night brand Sweet + Rich Chocolate Premium Dessert Sauce, divided

2 tablespoons (1 ounce) half-and-half or light cream

2 tablespoons (1 ounce) gold rum

1 cup ice cubes

1. Spoon Sunday Night Sweet + Rich Chocolate Premium Dessert Sauce into a small microwave-safe bowl. Heat in the microwave oven for 10 seconds. Drizzle 1/2 teaspoon of the sauce into a martini glass in a lacy pattern.

2. Whisk cream and rum into the remaining chocolate sauce until thoroughly combined. Pour into a cocktail shaker. Shake for 30 seconds. Strain into the prepared martini glass. Serve.