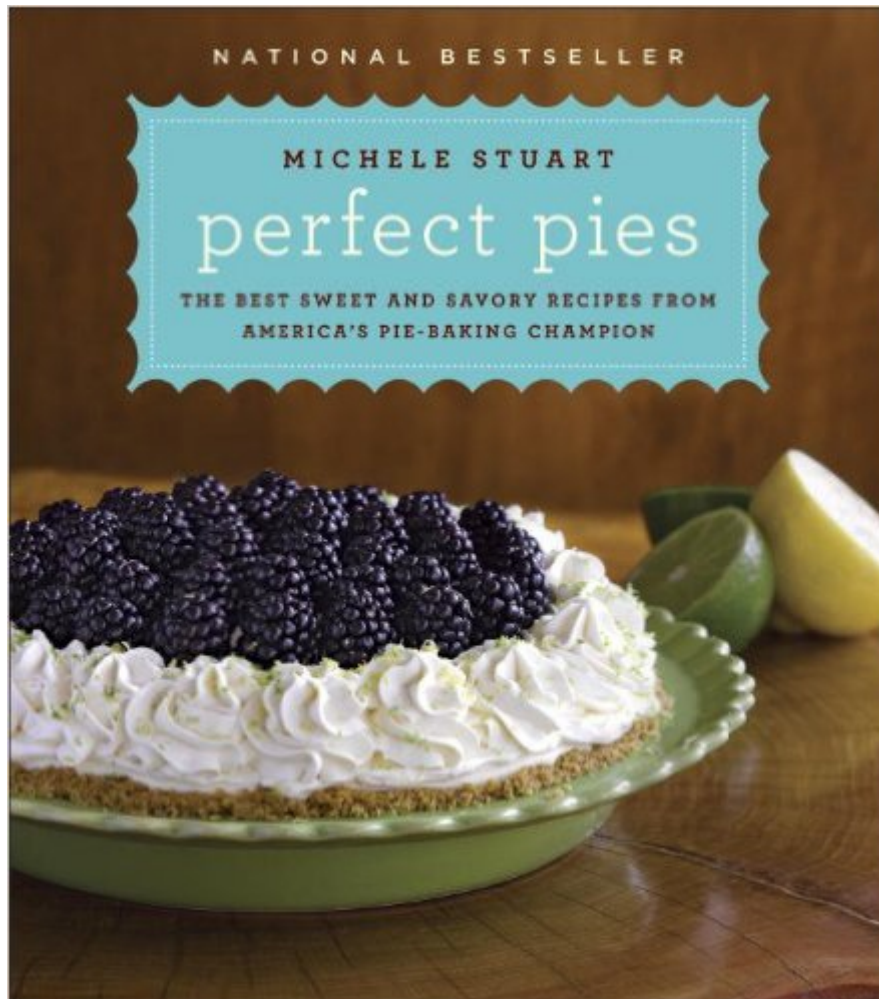


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Perfect Pies: The Best Sweet And Savory Recipes From America's Pie-Baking Champion



Synopsis

The smell of a pie baking in the kitchen immediately conjures up feelings of comfort, nostalgia, and love. Michele Stuart vividly remembers standing at her grandmother's apron hem as a child, as she fine-tuned (and improved!) family recipes that had been passed down for generations.

Eventually, Stuart's lifelong passion for pie-making inspired her to open what would become the world-famous shop Michele's Pies. You don't have to travel to Michele's Pies in Norwalk and Westport, Connecticut, though, to taste Stuart's mouthwatering creations. Perfect Pies shares nearly eighty delicious recipes, many of them National Pie Championships winners: There are desserts bursting with fruit (Country Apple Pie, Blueberry-Blackberry Pie), crunchy with nuts (Chocolate-Pecan-Bourbon Pie, Maple Walnut Pie), cream-filled delights (Coconut Custard Pie, Lemon Chiffon Pie), and pies perfect for a party (Ultimate Banana Split Pie, Candyland Pie). And let's not forget Stuart's sensational savory creations, from Lobster Pot Pie to Quiche Lorraine to Italian Wheat Pie. Stuart also passes along easy recipes for Hot Fudge Sauce, Raspberry Jam, and Whipped Cream to top it all off. Stuart's secret, she says, is that her pies are made by hand with love, but she doesn't neglect to advise you on the basic kitchen tools you'll need as she reveals essential tips and techniques, from how to roll out dough to the best way to make light and flaky crust. And of course she stresses the use of fresh, seasonal fruits and other wholesome ingredients. "The best pies are the ones that keep it simple," Stuart notes. So whether you're a pie novice, a weekend baker, or a seasoned pastry chef, Perfect Pies will help make everything you bake worthy of a blue ribbon.

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Customer Reviews

Although I live in a large metropolitan area that has literally hundreds of bakeries within a small radius, I often make the 70-mile journey to Michele's Pies in Norwalk CT. This specialty shop is well worth the effort to seek out! Michele Stuart's creations are extraordinary and unrivaled. It's impossible to pick a favorite from her vast array of pies, as every single offering is a masterpiece to savor! Michele has compiled the recipes for her famous, award-winning pies into this dazzling cookbook. It has massive appeal for all pie aficionados, from amateur home cooks to expert bakers. Michele built her success on what she learned baking alongside her grandmother in a home kitchen. What sets her pies apart is that they are "made with love". The personal stories that accompany each recipe clearly illustrate how she incorporates this special ingredient! Another of Michele's secrets is selecting the freshest ingredients available, preferably locally grown. She offers excellent advice for matching some of her pies with the most suitable season or time of year for baking them. Her instructions for processing fresh pumpkins to make Maple Pumpkin Pie (featured in her Food Network appearance on Throwdown with Bobby Flay) are remarkably simple to follow and eliminate the desire to ever use canned pumpkin again. The abundance of zucchini and tomatoes from my summer garden was perfect for her quiche recipe, which I used to bake a delicious meal that the whole family enjoyed. I am excited for my daughters to bake the Tiramisu Pie with me one of these weekends. Many of the pies featured in this cookbook are child-friendly and suitable for any holiday table. (The Candyland Pie is perfect for both, and Michele explains how to change it up for various holidays throughout the year!) The book is organized into the following sections: Crusts and Toppings, Farm Stand Pies, Nut Pies, Cream Pies, Party Pies, Savory Pies, and Cherry On Top. Each recipe provides clear and easy-to-follow directions. They are designated easy, moderate, or challenging, based on the preparation time. No fancy equipment or exotic ingredients are needed. Michele has removed all the intimidation out of making the perfect pie crust, so that even the most inexperienced baker can master it! The accompanying photographs are a treat for the senses, and you can practically smell and taste the pies right off the pages! This cookbook will delight anyone who enjoys pies, whether baking them or simply eating them! It is down-to-earth and brilliant in its simplicity. Note: Prior to her recent marriage, Michele Stuart was formerly known as Michele Albano, which is the name under which she won many of her pie awards and made appearances on the Food Network, Good Morning America and The Today Show.

I am a home baker...and do much more than most. I've made almost 500 pies this year...for church parties, weddings, holidays, and my family. I'm always looking for tips and tricks and twists on old recipes that update old tastes and traditions and this book gave me a few new things to try. Of

course, I love the traditional standards and sometimes you just can't improve on perfection, but with beautiful photos and clear instructions using common ingredients, pie making is made easy for everyone. And this book gives me new recipes to try for the savory pies as I am mostly a sweet pie baker. Always enjoy expanding my knowledge and recipe base.

If you already own a shelf-full of good cookbooks, //Perfect Pies// is unlikely to add anything useful to your collection. Few of the recipes are original, and nearly all you'll find in standard cookbooks and baking books. If you are a novice cook and baker, this has a good collection of standard pie recipes, some 66 of them including 13 savory pies (e.g. Quiche Lorraine). These recipes are good but not outstanding. The author included a few unusual pies like Candyland Pie made with Oreo cookie crust and filling that includes Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, mini marshmallows, Snicker Bars and fudge brownies. The recipes are well written and instructions are good though a novice bakers may scratch their heads at times reading the recipe steps. The designer of the book (most likely a non-cook) did a poor job on the layout as many recipes inconveniently flip over to next pages. The head notes are only fluff, not often informative. The sidebars are more interesting and instructional. Each recipe is labeled according its difficulty (from less than one hour to more than two hours prep time). In my advanced proof copy subject index is missing. Food photo illustrations are beautiful.

This is going to be short and (not so) sweet. I ordered this cookbook because it was published by the same folks who just completed David Venable's new cookbook, which, by the way, is outstanding. Having said that, I was immediately disappointed in Ms. Stuart's cookbook because it is almost photo-free. The recipes appear to be clear and concise and I certainly appreciate the pie crust photo intro. However, there are hardly any photos of the completed pies. While the artsy fartsy photos of a stack of ceramic pie plates, a stillife of whisk, or all Ms. Stuart's blue ribbons are pretty, to me it is more important to show what the completed recipe should look like. To be fair, there ARE 16 photos of completed pies amongst all the numerous recipes, and I found the helpful hints great. In the future, please go the extra mile to produce more photos of the pies. Even if you wanted to save some dollars by showing one page of all the completed pies, that would have been helpful. JMHO As always, .com did an excellent job by offering the best cost for the book not to mention their terrific shipping.

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