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Durham woman wins N.C. State Fair's Home Chef Spirited Pie Challenge

RALEIGH - A recipe for Blackbeard's Mulberry Pie took first place Saturday, Oct. 15 in the N.C. State Fair's Home Chef Spirited Pie Challenge, presented by the Distillers Association of North Carolina. Samantha Samon of Durham won \$500 for the winning recipe highlighting Raleigh Rum Company Sweet Dark Rum.

Taylor Weber of Raleigh took home second place and \$300 for her Painkiller Pie also featuring Raleigh Rum Company Dark Sweet Rum. Wendy Perry of Zebulon won \$200 and third place for her "Spirit" of Carteret County Coconutty Atlantic Beach Pie using Bogue Sound Distillery Coconut Cream Rum.

The winning recipe follows:

Blackbeard's Mulberry Pie

Rum Sour

1 cup Raleigh Rum Company Sweet Dark Rum
6 tablespoons simple syrup
6 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Crust

1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour - plus more for rolling
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon white granulated sugar
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled and cubed
4 tablespoons butter flavored Crisco, chilled
6 tablespoons ice cold water

Crumble Topping

1 cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled and cubed

Filling

1 ½ cups dried mulberries
2 cups fresh or frozen raspberries
2 cups fresh or frozen blackberries
2 teaspoons Pumpkin Pie Spice
⅔ cup brown sugar
⅔ cup white granulated sugar
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon butter
4-8 tablespoons lemon juice
4 tablespoons cornstarch
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
Zest of 3 lemons

Instructions:

Mix rum, simple syrup and lemon juice together to create a rum sour. Then place the dried mulberries in a small mixing bowl. Pour the rum sour over the dried mulberries until the mulberries are fully covered in liquid. Cover the bowl and let sit at room temperature for at least 6 hours, but ideally overnight. Once the mulberries have been thoroughly soaked, strain the mixture. The liquid can be utilized for future cocktails.

In a large mixing bowl combine flour, salt and sugar. Using a pastry blender, cut the butter and shortening into the mixture until the crumbles are in pea-sized bits. Add ice water into mixture 1 tablespoon at a time, stirring with a wooden spoon until the dough starts to bind together and forms large clumps. Fold dough into itself until it forms a ball. Wrap the ball of pie dough in plastic wrap, flatten slightly so it resembles a fat disk, and cool in the fridge for a minimum of 4 hours.

Mix the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt in a medium bowl. Using a pastry blender, combine butter into the mixture until the mixture is no longer floury and crumbs form. Store in the fridge or freezer until ready to use.

Lightly butter and flour a 9-inch pie pan. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough into a disc about 11 to 12 inches wide. Transfer to the pie plate and trim it so it extends about ½ inch beyond the edge of the pan. Flute the edges as desired. Place the pie pan in the fridge to let the crust cool.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees and place a foil lined baking sheet on the bottom rack.

Combine flour, white sugar, brown sugar and pie spice in a small mixing bowl and mix thoroughly. Melt butter in 3-4 quart pan. Once the butter is melted, combine the soaked mulberries, raspberries and blackberries with the sugar mixture in the pan. Cook over medium low heat and reduce to desired consistency. Mix desired amount of lemon juice with cornstarch to create a slurry. Combine with berry mixture and continue to cook until the cornstarch thickens the remaining liquids. Remove from heat and add vanilla extract. Pour filling into the prepared pie crust and pat the crumble topping on top.

Bake the pie on the hot baking sheet at 425 degrees for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees and bake until the topping reaches a desired golden brown, 60 to 80 minutes. Transfer the pie to a rack to cool completely.