

Cannoli Filling

“Leave the gun, take the cannoli.” Immortalized in the Godfather, this venerable dessert from Sicily hit the big screen and mainstream. Originally a part of the Carnevale season, the equivalent of Mardi Gras in Sicily, these fried fill pastries are now a year round treat in many Italian restaurants. The shells are not hard to make, they are essentially pie dough rolled around a cannoli tube and deep fried. Legend has it they were originally rolled around a piece of sugar cane, hence the term cannoli. They are then filled with a sweetened creamy filling which can contain ingredients ranging from chocolate chips to pistachios. Many will debate the value of mascarpone versus ricotta for a filling, or a combination of both. Here is an easy to prepare version of cannoli filling using mascarpone. Cannoli shells can be found in most grocery stores. If you can't find cannoli shells, you can fill phyllo cups with the filling and have an “open faced” cannoli. One key is to fill the cannoli at the last minute, otherwise they will get soggy and lose their crunch.

Ingredients:

8 ounces mascarpone cheese, room temperature
8 ounces heavy whipping cream
¼ cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ cup mini chocolate chips

Method:

Beat the mascarpone cheese until fluffy.
Make whipped cream with the cream, sugar, and vanilla.
Fold the whipped cream into the mascarpone.
Fold in the chocolate chips.
Put mixture into a pastry bag or Ziploc and cut off the corner.
Fill the shells, and mangia, mangia!