

Prep time: 30 minutes • Chill time: 4–6 hours (or overnight) • Total time: 4½–6½ hours

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Ingredients

For the Crust

- 1½ cups (about 180 g) toasted pecan halves, finely chopped
- 1½ cups (150 g) graham cracker crumbs (about 12 full sheets, crushed)
- 3 tbsp (38 g) granulated sugar

- ½ tsp fine sea salt
- 8 tbsp (113 g) unsalted butter, melted

For the Cream Filling

- 8 oz (227 g) full-fat cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- ¾ cup (90 g) powdered sugar
- ½ cup (100 g) packed light brown sugar
- 1½ tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp fine sea salt
- 1½ cups (360 ml) cold heavy whipping cream
- ½ cup (60 g) toasted pecans, finely chopped (folded in)

For the Caramel-Pecan Topping

- ½ cup (100 g) packed light brown sugar

- 4 tbsp (57 g) unsalted butter
 - 3 tbsp (45 ml) heavy cream
 - ¼ tsp fine sea salt
 - ¾ cup (90 g) toasted pecan halves, for garnish
 - Flaky sea salt, for finishing (optional)
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Step-by-Step Method

Phase 1 — Toast the Pecans (10 minutes, medium heat)

1. Preheat a dry skillet over medium heat (5 of 10). Add all the pecans (crust, filling, and topping amounts — about 2¾ cups total) in a single layer.
2. Toast for 4-6 minutes, stirring every 60 seconds, until fragrant and one shade darker. Watch closely — nuts go from toasted to burnt in under a minute.
3. Transfer immediately to a plate to cool. Once cool, chop: finely for the crust, finely for the filling, and leave the garnish halves whole.

Phase 2 — Build the Crust (10 minutes, no heat)

4. Lightly grease a 9-inch pie dish.
5. In a medium bowl, combine the finely chopped pecans, graham cracker crumbs, sugar, and salt. Pour in the melted butter and mix until it resembles wet sand and holds together when squeezed.
6. Press firmly into the bottom and up the sides of the pie dish, using the flat bottom of a measuring cup to compact it. Intensity: firm pressure — a loosely packed crust will crumble when sliced.
7. Place the crust in the freezer while you make the filling (at least 15 minutes).

Phase 3 — Make the Cream Filling (12-15 minutes, medium speed)

8. In a large bowl with a hand mixer (or stand mixer fitted with the paddle), beat the softened cream cheese on medium speed (4 of 10) for 1-2 minutes until smooth and lump-free.
9. Add the powdered sugar, brown sugar, vanilla, and salt. Beat on medium-low (3 of 10) for 1 minute, then scrape down the bowl and beat 30 seconds more.
10. In a separate chilled bowl, whip the cold heavy cream on medium-high (7 of 10) for 2-3 minutes until stiff peaks form — the beaters should leave a firm trail and the peaks should stand straight up.

11. Fold one-third of the whipped cream into the cream cheese mixture with a spatula to lighten it (gentle, 30 seconds — do not stir vigorously or you'll deflate it). Fold in the remaining whipped cream in two additions, along with the ½ cup chopped pecans, until just combined, about 1 minute total.
12. Spoon the filling into the chilled crust and smooth the top with an offset spatula. Cover loosely with plastic wrap (don't let it touch the surface) and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, ideally overnight.

Phase 4 — Caramel-Pecan Topping (5-7 minutes, medium-low heat)

13. In a small saucepan over medium-low heat (3 of 10), combine the brown sugar and butter. Stir constantly for 2-3 minutes until the butter melts and the mixture bubbles gently.
14. Add the heavy cream and salt (it will bubble up — that's normal). Simmer for 1-2 minutes, stirring, until slightly thickened. Remove from heat and let cool for 10 minutes — it will thicken further as it cools.
15. Just before serving, arrange the pecan halves over the chilled pie and drizzle with the warm (not hot) caramel. Finish with flaky sea salt if desired.

Phase 5 — Slice & Serve (5 minutes)

16. For the cleanest slices, dip a thin knife in hot water, dry it, and slice with one confident cut per slice. Serve chilled. Store leftovers covered in the refrigerator for up to 3 days

(the crust softens slightly after day 2).

Time & Intensity Summary

Phase	Time	Heat / Speed	Intensity
Toast pecans	4–6 min	Medium (5/10)	Watchful — stir every minute
Make crust	10 min	No heat	Firm, even pressure
Freeze crust	15 min	—	Passive
Cream filling	12–15 min	Medium (4/10), whip to 7/10	Moderate — gentle folding
Chill pie	4–6 hrs	—	Passive
Caramel topping	5–7 min	Medium-low (3/10)	Constant stirring
Slice & serve	5 min	—	Easy

Make-ahead tip: The crust can be made and frozen up to 1 week ahead; the fully assembled pie (without topping) keeps beautifully overnight, making it an ideal do-ahead dessert for holidays and dinner parties.

Nutrition (per serving, based on 10 servings)

Estimates calculated from ingredient amounts; values will vary with brands and portion size.

- Calories: ~540 kcal
- Total fat: ~42 g

- Saturated fat: ~18 g
- Cholesterol: ~80 mg
- Sodium: ~220 mg
- Total carbohydrates: ~36 g
- Dietary fiber: ~2 g
- Total sugars: ~26 g
- Protein: ~5 g