

Menu

[Restaurant-Style Salsa with Tortilla Chips](#)
[Jalapeño-Lime Marinated Beef Sirloin](#) • Warm Tortillas
Chopped Salad with [Creamy Chili Dressing](#)
[Chocolate Cream Tart](#)

The Game Plan

The day before or early in the day (at least 8 hours before dinner):

(About 1 hour and 15 minutes hands on, plus 4 hours chilling time)

- Make the chocolate cookie crust for the tart. While the crust bakes, make the salsa, and chill the salsa until serving. Use the same food processor bowl to make the marinade for the beef – no need to wash it out in between. Chill the marinade until needed.
- The crust needs to cool for 25 minutes, just enough time to make the Double Chocolate Pudding. Pour the pudding into the crust and chill the tart for at least 4 hours.
- Make the Creamy Chili Dressing for the salad; chill until serving.
- Shred some Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese for sprinkling on the salad and tortillas; chill until serving.
- Clean up the kitchen and run the dishwasher

Three to seven hours before dinner:

(5 to 10 minutes hands on, plus 2 to 6 hours marinating time)

- If you're using a roast (not a steak), untie the butcher's string and trim off any visible fat and connective tissue from the top of the roast, then retie with fresh string. Then, whatever cut of beef you're using, slather the beef all over with the marinade/rub. Wrap the meat with plastic wrap, transfer it to a plate, and chill until needed.

2½ hours before dinner:

(30 minutes)

- Empty the dishwasher.
- Make the whipped cream topping for the tart and sprinkle with shaved chocolate if desired. Chill, uncovered, until serving.
- Clean up the kitchen and load the dishwasher with the tart prep dishes.
- Set the table.
- Transfer some of the salsa to a serving bowl with tortilla chips alongside.

Enjoy the appetizer.

40 to 60 minutes before dinner:

(About 25 minutes hands on plus oven heating time and roasting time)

- Heat the oven and a cast iron skillet for searing the beef.
- Open the dinner wine to let it breathe.
- Wipe the marinade off the beef. Cook the beef for the appropriate time for its thickness and your desired doneness level as specified in the recipe, about 10 to 25 minutes.

- Remove the beef from the oven and let it rest for 10 minutes. While the beef rests, make the salad and warm some flour tortillas. Sprinkle the tortillas with some of the shredded cheese and fold them into quarters.
- Start the dinner music.
- Light the candles.
- Carve the beef.

After dinner:

(5 minutes)

- Clear the table. While your partner loads the dishwasher, slice and serve the tart.

Notes:

- *We like to enjoy an appetizer about 2 hours before dinner, and then relax for a little while before proceeding with making and eating dinner. If you prefer to have the appetizer closer to serving, adjust the timing accordingly.*
- *The hands-on work time estimates (in parentheses below the start times) are for one person doing it all, but some of these tasks can be shared or delegated, shortening the prep time.*