

Holiday Pie Collection

Pies were baked in America as soon as the early settlers set up housekeeping on dry land. Beyond mere preference, however, there was a practical reason for making pies, especially in the harsh and primitive conditions endured by the first colonists. A piecrust used less flour than bread and it did not require anything as complicated as a brick oven for baking. More important, though, was how pies could stretch even the most meager provisions into sustaining a few

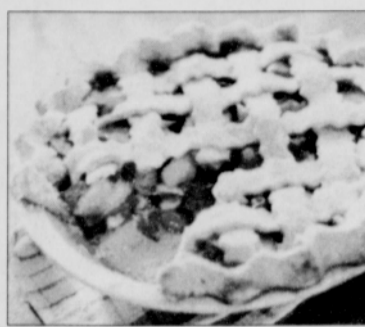
more hungry mouths.

The first pies were very simple and generally of the savory (meat and cheese) kind. Flaky pastry fruit-filled turnovers appeared in the early 19th century. Pie—the filling and baking of sweet (fruits, nuts, cheese) or savory (meat, fish, cheese) ingredients and spices in casing composed of flour, fat and water is an ancient practice.

The basic concept of pies has changed little throughout the ages. The basic concept of a pie is taken to mean a mixture of ingredients encased and cooked in pastry. Pie variations are endless; let your imagination run wild.



FOOD



Something Special Apple-Cherry Pie

"This delicious pie combines everyone's No. 1 pie fillings -- apple and cherry -- into one holiday treat. Almonds add a nutty boost."

Ingredients

- Pastry for double-crust pie
- 1/2 cup toasted almonds, chopped
- 6 cups thinly sliced, peeled Jonathan or Golden Delicious apples
- 1/3 cup cherry preserves
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 Tbs. all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. ground cardamom
- 1 cup frozen unsweetened pitted tart red cherries, thawed
- Milk
- Sugar

Directions

1. Prepare and roll out pastry. Line a 9-inch pie plate with half of the pastry. Trim bottom pastry 1/2 inch beyond edge of pie plate. Sprinkle toasted almonds on the bottom crust.
2. In a large mixing bowl, toss apples with the cherry preserves. In a small bowl, stir together the 1/2 cup sugar, flour, and cardamom. Add to the apple mixture in the mixing bowl; add cherries. Gently toss the fruit to coat.
3. Transfer mixture to the pastry-lined pie plate. Cut remaining pastry into 1/2-inch-wide strips for lattice top. Weave over filling and press into bottom pastry. Fold bottom pastry over strips; seal and crimp edge. Brush with milk and sprinkle with additional sugar.
4. Cover the edge of the pie with foil to prevent over-browning. Bake in a 375 degree F oven for 25 minutes. Remove the foil. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes more or until the lattice top is golden and the filling is bubbly. Cool the pie on a wire rack.

Peachy Cranberry Pie

"Be sure the peaches are packed in heavy syrup -- it's the sweetness from the syrup that helps tame the tartness of the cranberries."

Ingredients

- 1 (29-ounce) can peach slices in heavy syrup
- 1 (12-ounce) package fresh or frozen cranberries (3 cups)
- 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2/3 cup shortening
- 6 to 7 Tbs. cold water
- 1 double pie crust recipe



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degree F. Drain peach slices, reserving 1/2 cup syrup. Cut the peach slices crosswise into thirds; set aside. In a large saucepan, combine reserved syrup and cranberries. Bring to boiling; reduce heat to medium. Cook, uncovered, until the cranberry skins pop, stirring occasionally (about 2 minutes).
2. In a small bowl, stir together sugar and cornstarch. Add sugar mixture to the cranberry mixture. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Remove from heat; stir in the peaches.

Set aside and keep warm.

3. On a lightly floured surface, flatten one dough ball. Roll from center to edges into a 12-inch circle. To transfer pastry, wrap it around the rolling pin; unroll into a 9-inch pie plate. Ease pastry into pie plate, being careful not to stretch pastry. Trim bottom pastry to 1/2 inch beyond edge of pie plate.
4. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes or until filling is bubbly and pastry is golden brown. Cool on a wire rack at least 2 hours. Serve warm, or to store, cover and let stand at room temperature for up to 24 hours.

Chocolate Caramel Pecan Pie



"This extremely indulgent treat only takes 15 minutes to prepare. This delicious creation is really sweet; I suggest serving smaller portions."

Ingredients

- 25 caramel candies
- 2 Tbs. milk
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 graham cracker crust
- 1 pkg. (8-squares) semi-sweet baking chocolate
- 1 tub (8-ounces) French vanilla or regular whipped topping, thawed, divided

Directions

1. Place caramels in medium microwaveable bowl; add milk. Microwave on HIGH 2-1/2 to 3 minutes; or until caramels are completely melted, stirring after each minute. Stir in pecans. Pour into crust.
2. Microwave chocolate in medium microwaveable bowl on HIGH 1-1/2 to 2 minutes; or until chocolate is completely melted, stirring after each minute. Add 2 cups of the whipped topping; stir with wire whisk until well blended. Spread evenly over caramel layer in crust.
3. Refrigerate at least 2 hours. Let stand at room temperature 10 to 15 minutes before serving. Top with the remaining whipped topping.



Oatmeal-Pecan Pie

"The perennial dessert favorite 'pecan pie' gets a chewy-good twist in this recipe. Oatmeal adds texture to the decadent pie, which fits any holiday menu."

Ingredients

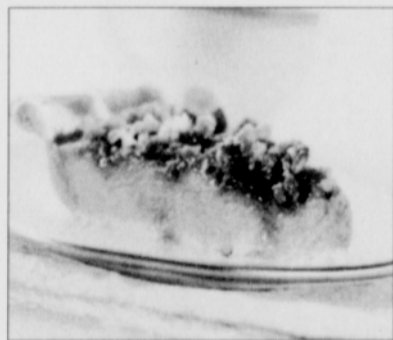
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup dark-colored corn syrup
- 2/3 cup regular rolled oats
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 recipe Pastry for Single-Crust Pie
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- Whipped cream (optional)

Directions

1. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter or margarine. Remove from heat and stir in the sugar, corn syrup, and oats.
2. Stir in the eggs and vanilla.
3. Pour mixture into the Pastry for Single-Crust Pie. Top with pecans. Cover edge of pie with foil to prevent over-browning.
4. Bake in a 325 degree F oven for 25 minutes. Remove foil. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes more or until set. Cool on a wire rack. Serve with whipped cream, if you like.

Caramel-Pecan Pumpkin Pie

"Caramel, pecan and pumpkin in a pie - what's not to love?"



Ingredients

- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp. ground allspice
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 2 Tbs. butter, softened
- 2 slightly beaten eggs
- 1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin
- 1 recipe Pastry for Single-Crust Pie
- 1/4-cup half-and-half, light cream, or milk
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 Tbs. all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. finely shredded lemon peel
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla

Directions

1. Prepare and roll out pastry. Line a 9-inch pie plate with pastry. Trim; crimp edge as desired. In a large bowl stir together eggs, pumpkin, and half-and-half or milk. Stir in the granulated sugar, flour, lemon peel, vanilla, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice. Pour pumpkin mixture into pastry-lined pie plate. Cover the edge of the pie with foil to prevent over-browning. Bake in a 375 degree F oven for 25 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl stir together the brown sugar, pecans, and butter until combined. Remove foil. Sprinkle brown sugar mixture over top of pie. Bake for 20 minutes more or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean and topping is golden and bubbly. Cool on a wire rack. Cover and refrigerate within two hours.

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