

CLASSIC APPLE PIE

This recipe is from Theresa Vandenberg LaVaque, grandmother of Theresa Nelson.

1. Pie Filling

5-7 cups apples, peeled, sliced and cored (use several types of apples to get the best mix)
2/3 - 3/4 cup sugar, mixed white and brown sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 Tablespoon cornstarch (less if the apples are not juicy)
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1-1/2 Tablespoon butter
1-2 Tablespoons lemon juice
(1 teaspoon grated lemon rind)

Combine sugars, salt, cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg and sift over the cut apples. Stir until the apples are coated. Let the apples sit while you make the crust. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

2. Crust

2 cups unbleached flour
1 teaspoon salt
2/3 - 3/4 cup lard * (yes, lard, not Crisco, oil or butter)
2 Tablespoons butter
4-6 Tablespoons water

Sift flour and salt together. Cut in half of lard with pastry blender, then the rest until the mixture is pea-size overall. Sprinkle one tablespoon of water at a time while gathering mixture with a fork, until it holds together. Form it into a ball, and cut in two pieces, one slightly larger than the other. Amount of water will vary depending on the flour and temperature. Lightly flour a pastry board and rolling pin, and roll out the larger piece until it is about 1/8" thick and about 2" larger than the top rim of your pie pan. Roll the crust "around the clock" to 12, then 6, to 9 then 3, etc. Gently roll the crust around the rolling pin and then unroll it onto the plate - this way it prevents the crust from tearing while lifting it. Lightly prick lower crust with a fork. Use a 9 or 10" pie pan, with slightly more sugar, lard and apples for the larger pan. After assembly (below) roll top crust (Smaller piece) and place onto pie using same method. Lard makes the best, flakiest crust, but shortening (Crisco) may be substituted in combination with butter if needed.

3. Assemble

Gently place apples in pie shell, in closely packed layers. Sprinkle lemon juice and dot with butter. You may sprinkle with 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind if you wish. Roll out top crust to about 1" larger than pie rim, moisten top edge of lower crust, and transfer to pie the same way as the bottom. Press edges to seal and make decorative edge with fingers or fork. Cut apple-shaped slit to allow steam to escape. Place thin strips of aluminum foil along pie edges. You may sprinkle sugar and cinnamon on top if you wish.

4. Bake at 450 degrees for 10 minutes, then lower heat to 375 degrees for 40-50 minutes until pie is golden brown. Remove aluminum strips during last ten minutes to brown edges.

* Lard is rendered pork fat and is the best fat to use for pie crust. Bought from a butcher, it's pure and has no trans fats or added chemicals and does not have a pork taste. Crisco is hydrogenated oils and has trans fats, which are not healthy. Vegetable oil makes a very hard, stiff crust. Butter makes an extremely flaky crust that falls apart, though it is tasty. Please use good lard and you will be happy with this crust.