

English Apple Pie

BAKE SENSE

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English Apple pie

Inspired by the English Apple Pie from Florence White's Good Things in England and my own nostalgia for the part of pie that sees crust and filling converge.

A buttery sweet shortcrust is essential, as is the combination of apples. Cooking apples create the fluff, juxtaposed with chunks of dessert apple for bite, each variety contributing flavour and aroma which is amplified by making a stock from the apple peel and cores.

Florence adds rose petals and lemon zest to her filling, sound suggestions for a pie served at the tail end of summer as the apple season is just beginning.

Ingredients

Yields one 8-9inch deep filled pie.

- 1 x Batch Double-Triple Sweet Shortcrust
- 600g Bramley Apples
- 400g Dessert apple such as Cox's Orange Pippin, Russet or other flavourful variety.
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- juice of 1 small lemon (1/2 lemon if its particularly large)
- 1/4 tsp flaky sea salt
- 1 tbsp breadcrumbs
- 40g caster sugar
- 40g soft light brown sugar
- 15g unsalted butter
- 1 egg to glaze the pie, plus a little caster or Demerara to sprinkle.

Method

- Peel and core the Bramley apples (reserve the cores and peel) and cut them into chunks approximately 2cm x 2cm. Place a frying pan (large enough to accommodate all the Bramley apple chunks) over low to medium heat and add the 15g unsalted butter; once melted, add the apple chunks and both sugars. Continue to cook until the apples have broken down to a fluff-filled puree. This can take anywhere from 20-30 minutes, and the mixture should look dry with no residual water.
- Whilst the Bramleys are cooking, core the dessert apples (there's no need to peel, but again, reserve the cores) and cut into chunks, approximately 2cm x 2cm and place in a bowl with the lemon juice to prevent discolouration.
- Place the apple peel and cores in a separate small pan and add cold water to cover. Place over the heat and bring to a boil, then simmer for 20 minutes. This will create an apple stock that will be intense in flavour and enriched with pectin, contributing a more pronounced apple flavour and a thickening quality for the filling. Set aside and allow to cool completely. Once the Bramleys have cooked down, remove from the heat, add the ground cinnamon and nutmeg and set aside to cool.

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- When the filling has cooled, stir through the dessert apple chunks (including the lemon juice), sea salt and 50ml apple stock—taste to check for sweetness and adjust if required by adding more sugar. Set filling aside.
 - Remove one round of pastry from the fridge and let it temper for a few minutes so it becomes pliable but not too warm; this makes it less prone to crack when rolling. Lightly grease your pie tin with butter and roll the pastry to 4mm thick. Use your pie dish as a guide; it should be approximately 2 inches wider than your dish.
 - Lift the pastry into the dish and press firmly around the base and up to the sides to ensure good contact between the pastry and the tin. There should be some overhang but not too much; use kitchen scissors to trim areas with too much excess.
 - Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the pastry base and then add the cooled apple filling; place the half-constructed pie in the fridge.
 - Remove the second round of pastry from the fridge and roll out again to 4mm thick and approximately 1- 2 inches wider than your pie dish.
 - Remove the pie from the fridge and add the pastry lid; gently press the pastry to expel any large air bubbles, and press around the edge of the pie to anchor the pastry lid to the pastry base so the two do not part during the bake. Once it has sealed, use a sharp knife or kitchen scissors to trim the edge.
 - Return the pie to the fridge and chill for an hour; this allows the pastry to rest and set, making the final appearance of the pie once baked, all the better for it. Place a baking stone or heavy gauge baking tray in the oven and heat to 180 degrees C.
 - Remove the pie from the fridge, egg wash the crust and sprinkle with caster or Demerara sugar. Cut two slits in the top of the pie to vent the steam as it bakes.
 - Immediately place the pie in the oven onto the preheated stone or tray. Bake for 30 minutes, then rotate and continue to bake for 30-40 minutes until you can see juices bubbling from the vents in the centre.
 - If you are worried that the pie is getting too dark in colour, you can cover it with foil, but be sure to remove it for at least 10 minutes towards the end of cooking to allow any excess steam to escape.
 - Remove from the oven, and cool slightly before serving with custard, ice cream, pouring cream or all of the above.
 - The pie will keep well in the fridge for up to three days. It is much easier to cut once completely cold, and individual portions can be re-heated to serve as needed. It is perfect eaten at room temperature with clotted cream, a pool or ice cold cream or a jug of piping hot custard.