

Maple–Apple Butter Mini Pies

In a small bowl, stir together the apple butter and cornstarch until well blended. Set aside. In a fry pan over medium-low heat, combine the sugar, 1 Tbs. of the butter, the cinnamon and salt and cook, stirring frequently, until the sugar dissolves, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool.

In another fry pan over medium-high heat, combine the remaining 1 Tbs. butter and the apple and cook, stirring, until tender, about 6 minutes. Add the sugar mixture and stir to combine. Remove from the heat and let cool.

Preheat an electric pie maker according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Using the accompanying pastry cutter, cut the pie dough into 4 large rounds. Working quickly, place each dough round into the pie maker. Using the accompanying pastry press, mold the dough into the wells to form the bottom crusts. Divide the apple butter mixture among the crusts and spread evenly. Next, top with the cooked apple mixture. Scatter the pecans over the top of each pie.

Bake the pies according to the manufacturer’s instructions until the crusts are well browned, about 10 minutes. Using a fork, carefully lift one edge of each pie just enough to slide a small offset spatula under the bottom and transfer to a wire rack to cool slightly or completely. Repeat with the remaining pies. Drizzle 1 tsp. of the maple syrup over each pie. Serve warm or at room temperature. Makes 4 mini pies.

Adapted from *Mini Pies*, by Abigail Johnson Dodge (Weldon Owen, 2011).

Maple-Pecan Pie

Press the dough round into a 9-inch pie dish. Trim the edges, leaving a ¼-inch overhang. Fold the overhang under itself and pinch it together to create a high edge on the pan’s rim. Decoratively flute the edge. Refrigerate or freeze for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, position a rack in the lower third of an oven and preheat to 375°F.

Line the pastry shell with aluminum foil or parchment paper and fill with pie weights. Bake for 20 minutes, then lift an edge of the foil. If the dough looks wet, continue to bake, checking every 5 minutes, until the dough is pale gold, for a total baking time of 25 to 30 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and remove the foil and weights. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.

In a saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the maple syrup to a boil and boil for 8 to 10 minutes. Pour into a heatproof measuring pitcher. The syrup should be reduced to 1½ cups. If necessary, return it to the pan and boil until sufficiently reduced. Let cool.

In a bowl, stir together the eggs, brown sugar, reduced maple syrup, salt, melted butter and vanilla until well mixed. Add the pecans and stir well. Pour into the partially baked pie shell, distributing the pecans evenly. Bake the pie until the center is slightly puffed and firm to the touch, 30 to 35 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool for about 45 minutes. Serves 8.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Pie & Tart*, by Carolyn Beth Weil (Simon & Schuster, 2003).

Ingredients for Maple–Apple Butter Mini Pies

⅓ cup apple butter or pear butter

1 tsp. cornstarch

3 Tbs. sugar

2 Tbs. unsalted butter

¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

Pinch of salt

1 apple, about 6 oz., peeled, cored and cut into ¼-inch wedges

1 pie dough round for a 9- to 9½-inch pie

⅓ cup chopped pecans (optional)

4 tsp. maple syrup

Ingredients for Deep-Dish Piecrust

2½ cups all-purpose flour

2 Tbs. sugar

2 tsp. salt

16 Tbs. (2 sticks) cold unsalted butter, cut into ¼-inch pieces

6 to 8 Tbs. ice water

1 egg, lightly beaten with 1 Tbs. water

Ingredients for Maple-Pecan Pie

1 rolled-out round of basic pie dough

2 cups pure maple syrup

2 eggs, lightly beaten

¼ cup firmly packed light or dark brown sugar

⅓ tsp. salt

2 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1½ cups pecans, coarsely chopped

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Technique Class: My Oh My, It’s Time for PIE!

No matter how bountiful the feast, one Thanksgiving rule must be followed: Save room for dessert. The hearty desserts featured here embody the holiday’s spirit of abundance. The American custard pie dates back to colonial times. The first pumpkin pie baked by early settlers was probably made by removing the seeds from a whole pumpkin, filling it with milk, honey and spices, and then baking it until the inside was soft.

Deep-Dish Piecrust

Use this recipe when preparing deep-dish pies, such as our Classic Pumpkin Pie and Boubon-Pecan Pumpkin Butter Pie (included in this brochure). It makes a double batch of dough: one for the bottom crust and the other for creating decorative cutouts to place atop the baked and cooled pie.

In a food processor, combine the flour, sugar and salt and pulse to combine. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Add the 6 Tbs. ice water and pulse twice. The dough should hold together when squeezed with your fingers but should not be sticky. If it is crumbly, add more water, 1 tsp. at a time, pulsing twice after each addition. Turn the dough out onto a work surface and divide in half. Shape each into a disk. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to 2 days.

Remove the dough from the refrigerator and let stand for 5 minutes. Place 1 dough disk between 2 sheets of lightly floured waxed paper and roll out into a 12-inch round about ⅓ inch thick. Transfer to a 9-inch deep-dish pie dish and press the dough into the dish. Trim the edges, leaving a ½-inch overhang. Fold under the excess dough and, using your thumb, decoratively flute the edges. Roll out the remaining dough disk in the same manner. Using decorative piecrust cutters, cut out about 30 cutouts and transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Place the piecrust and the cutouts in the freezer for 30 minutes.

Position a rack in the lower third of an oven. Place a baking sheet on the rack. Preheat the oven to 400°F.

Brush the edges of the crust with some of the egg mixture. Line the piecrust with parchment paper and fill with pie weights. Place the pie dish on the preheated baking sheet in the oven and bake for 20 minutes. Carefully remove the parchment and weights and bake until the crust is light golden, about 5 minutes more. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely.

Reduce the oven to 375°F. Brush the cutouts with the egg mixture and bake until golden, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer the baking sheet to a wire rack and let cool. Makes enough dough for one 9-inch deep-dish piecrust plus decorative cutouts.

Making Piecrust—Tips for Success

- Take care not to overblend the fat and flour.

- Add enough water so the dough can be rolled out easily (better a bit too much water than not enough).

- Handle the pastry no more than necessary.

- Overblending, adding too little water and handling the pastry too much can make a crust tough.

- If you like the taste of butter, use it in place of shortening, or try a combination of butter and shortening, which will produce a firmer crust than one made with shortening only.

- Pastry made with butter must be refrigerated for at least 1 hour before being rolled out.

- When blind baking a pie crust, be sure to use pie weights to create an evenly baked bottom crust.

- Make-Ahead Tip:** Pie dough may be made ahead and frozen for up to 2 months. To freeze, place the dough round on a 12-inch cardboard circle and wrap it well with plastic wrap. Alternatively, use the round to line a pie dish, flute the edge and wrap well.

Working with Pie Dough

To roll out pie dough: Remove the dough disks from the refrigerator and let stand at room temperature for 10 to 20 minutes. Dust a work surface and rolling pin with flour.

Rolling from the center toward the edges and in all directions, roll out the dough into a 12-inch round about ⅛ inch thick. Lift and turn the dough several times as you roll to prevent sticking, and dust the surface and the rolling pin with flour as needed.

To line a pie dish with dough: Carefully roll the dough around the rolling pin and position the pin over the pie dish. Unroll the dough and center it in the dish, gently but firmly pressing it against the bottom and sides while taking care not to pull or stretch it.

To prebake (blind bake) a single-crust pie: Preheat an oven to 400°F. Line the frozen (or chilled) piecrust in the pie dish with a piece of parchment paper or aluminum foil. Fill the lined crust with pie weights.

Bake the lined crust until it dries out, 10 to 15 minutes. Check to see if the crust is ready by pulling up one corner of the parchment paper. Remove the parchment paper and weights after the crust has a dried surface appearance. For a partially baked crust, continue to bake until the crust is lightly browned on the edges and dry-looking on the bottom, about 5 minutes more. For a fully baked crust, continue to bake until the entire crust is golden brown, about 10 minutes more.

Troubleshooting Pies

| What happened | Why it happened |
|--|--|
| Pie dough is sticky and hard to roll out. | Too much water was added, use extra flour when rolling; dough is too warm, chill dough in refrigerator for 30 minutes before proceeding. |
| Pie dough is stiff and hard to roll out. | Not enough water added to dough, or dough is too cold; let it warm up before proceeding. |
| Blind-baked single-crust pie dough did not hold its shape. | Too few pie weights were used for blind baking; dough did not rest long enough or was too soft. |
| Blind-baked single-crust pie dough shrank in pan. | Dough was not chilled long enough, or was stretched too much when lining the pan. |
| Pie is browning too quickly. | Oven is too hot; cover pie loosely with aluminum foil and continue baking. |
| Piecrust is not fully baked on bottom. | Crust was not partially baked before filling was added; especially true for custard pies. |
| Piecrust is dense rather than flaky. | Butter and dough were overworked. |

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Essentials of Baking*, by Cathy Burgett, Elinor Klivans and Lou Seibert Pappas (Oxmoor House, 2003).

Classic Pumpkin Pie

To add a fanciful finish to this pumpkin pie, use decorative cutters to make autumnal shapes from rolled-out pie dough. If desired, use the tip of a paring knife to create details on the cutouts, such as veins on the leaves. Then bake the cutouts and place them on the baked and cooled pie. When preparing this pie, be sure to use a deep-dish pie dish.

Preheat an oven to 375°F.

In a bowl, whisk together the brown sugar, cornstarch, salt, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and cloves. Add the pumpkin, eggs, cream and milk and whisk to combine.

Pour the filling into the prebaked piecrust. Bake until the center of the pie is set, 60 to 65 minutes, covering the edges of the crust with aluminum foil after 30 minutes if they brown too quickly.

Transfer the pie to a wire rack and let cool completely, at least 2 hours, before serving. Serves 10.

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Bourbon-Pecan Pumpkin Butter Pie

You can do much of the preparation for this pie in advance. Make the dough up to two days ahead, wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate. The day before Thanksgiving, roll out the dough, place it in the pie dish and freeze. Then make and freeze the decorative cutouts. To free up your oven on Thanksgiving Day, you can bake the pie a day ahead of time. Let it cool, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until serving time.

Position a rack in the lower third of an oven. Place a cookie sheet on the rack. Preheat the oven to 325°F. (The pie dish will sit on the cookie sheet, which will help the bottom of the crust to brown.)

In a large bowl, gently whisk the eggs. Add the pecan pumpkin butter, evaporated milk and bourbon and whisk until well combined.

Pour the filling into the prebaked piecrust. Bake until the center of the pie is just set, 1 to 1¼ hours, covering the edges of the crust with aluminum foil after 30 minutes if they brown too quickly.

Transfer the pie to a wire rack and let cool for at least 4 hours before serving. If making in advance, cover the cooled pie with plastic wrap and refrigerate up to overnight.

To serve, cut the pie into slices and serve with whipped cream. Serves 8 to 10.

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Ingredients for Classic Pumpkin Pie

1¼ cups firmly packed dark brown sugar

1 Tbs. cornstarch

½ tsp. salt

1½ tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. ground ginger

¼ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

⅛ tsp. ground cloves

2 cups pumpkin puree

3 eggs

1 cup heavy cream

⅓ cup milk

1 prebaked and cooled deep-dish piecrust (see recipe in brochure)

Ingredients for Bourbon-Pecan Pumpkin Butter Pie

4 eggs

2 cups (about 1½ jars) Muirhead pecan pumpkin butter

1¼ cups plus 1 Tbs. evaporated milk

3 Tbs. bourbon

1 prebaked and cooled deep-dish piecrust (see recipe in brochure)

Whipped cream for serving