

Karen Woods' Fruit Pie & Crust

Fruit Pie Crust

(adapted from a Williams Sonoma blueberry pie recipe by Karen Woods)

An excellent pie crust for juicy fruits such as blueberries, dewberries, blackberries, and peaches.

Basic Single Crust Pie Dough:

One full cup and a quarter of a cup (1 ¼ c.) all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon sugar

A quarter of a teaspoon salt

1 stick (8 Tablespoons) unsalted butter

3 Tablespoons very cold water

Place 3 Tablespoons water plus extra water to freeze in a freezer safe glass or very small bowl. Place in freezer for about 10 to 15 minutes. I do this when I start my pie crusts. Remove the frozen ice from the top of the glass or bowl and use 3 Tablespoons of the very cold water later in the recipe.

In a large bowl, stir together the flour, sugar, and salt.

Using a one-sided grater, grate the butter into the flour mixture. Using a pastry cutter, cut the butter into the flour mixture until the texture resembles very coarse cornmeal.

Add the very cold water and mix with a spoon or by hand until the dough pulls together. I usually have to press the mixture into a ball, press more of the flour mixture in, knead it in slightly, then back to ball form a couple of times to get the dough to pull together. Don't overwork the dough or it becomes tough.

Transfer the dough ball to a lightly floured surface and flatten into a disk. Roll out immediately using a lightly floured rolling pin. Do not chill the dough prior to rolling out. Can be rolled out to about 12 inches in diameter about one-eighth of an inch thick.

Fold dough in half and carefully transfer to a pie plate. I use glass pie plates. Unfold and ease around the plate, insuring there are no air bubbles between the bottom and sides of the plate. Trim the edge of the dough leaving up to an inch of overhang. If using a double or lattice crust, cut the top crust or lattice strips slightly larger or longer than the bottom crust. Fold the edge of the top crust over the bottom crust and crimp the edges to seal. Flute the edges if desired. If a top crust is used, cut an asterisk 4 to 5 inches across in the center to vent steam during baking.

Always, always, always cover the crust with a pie crust shield as it tends to burn easily. Set the oven rack at least one position higher than center (top third of the oven) to help keep the pie crust edges from burning.

Makes one pie crust for a nine-and-a-half inch pie plate or smaller and serves eight.

Recipe may be doubled for a double crust or lattice crust, but you will need a very large bowl. I usually make the crust in two batches using the same bowl.

Two Tablespoons of ground pecans, walnuts, almonds, or hazelnuts may be added to the flour mixture without any other changes.

May be frozen, well wrapped in plastic wrap, for up to two months either rolled out flat on cardboard or lining a freezable pie plate with the edges fluted. If frozen, thaw before placing in oven.

Fruit Pie

(adapted from a Williams Sonoma blueberry pie recipe by Karen Woods)

4 cups frozen blueberries (dewberries, blackberries, peaches, etc. may be substituted for blueberries)

1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice, strained

Three-quarters of a cup sugar

3 Tablespoons cornstarch

Half of a teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

A quarter of a teaspoon salt

Half of a teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 Tablespoon cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

Have pie crust ready in pie plate before beginning so the berries do not thaw out.

Set the oven rack at least one position higher than center (top third of the oven) to help keep the pie crust edges from burning.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

In a small bowl, stir together the sugar, cornstarch, lemon zest, salt and cinnamon. Set aside.

Place the blueberries in a large bowl. Sprinkle with the lemon juice and toss to coat evenly. Sprinkle the sugar mixture over the berries coated with lemon juice and toss to coat evenly.

Immediately transfer to the dough-lined plate. Sprinkle the butter pieces evenly over the coated blueberries.

Can be baked as either a single crust, double crust, or lattice crust. If using a double or lattice crust, cut the top crust or lattice strips slightly larger or longer than the bottom crust. Fold the edge of the top crust over the bottom crust and crimp the edges to seal. Flute the edges if desired. If a top crust is used, cut an asterisk 4 to 5 inches across in the center to vent steam during baking.

Always, always, always cover the crust with a pie crust shield as it tends to burn easily. I use aluminum pie crust shields and have never tried aluminum foil or silicon shields.

Bake until the crust is golden and the filling thick and bubbling, usually 60 to 75 minutes for frozen berries.

Transfer to a wire rack or potholders set on a flat surface to cool. It will completely set in 1 to 2 hours.

To reheat, rebake in a preheated 350 degrees oven for 10 to 15 minutes. Use your pie crust shields.

The original recipe had instructions for fresh blueberries and frozen berries. The only difference was time for baking. For fresh berries, bake for only 50 to 60 minutes. I have tried both methods with blueberries, dewberries, blackberries, and peaches and the frozen method always turns out better for some reason. I freeze any fresh berries prior to baking.

Makes one fruit pie for a nine-and-a-half inch pie plate or smaller and serves eight.