



AS SIMPLE AS PIE!

Pie has been a staple food since the founding of our great country. Americans love pie! It doesn't get any simpler than that. There is nothing more enjoyable than a great piece of pie with a cup of freshly brewed coffee or a cup of perfectly steeped tea. When I was working in restaurants, I "always" made sure to have a variety of pies (cream, fruit, custard, and occasionally a traditional meat pie) on the menu. They would sell all the time, because the great thing about pie is that it has no season. Yes, there are some pies that tend to be associated with holidays, Pumpkin and Sweet Potato at Thanksgiving and Pecan at Christmas, but you can feature these pies at any time of the year, and I know they would sell. Pies come in sweet and savory, mini, deep dish, and deep fried. Pies, perhaps more than any other food, are so endearing. And to me, that is why pie has become the cool kid on the dessert block again. Over the last few years, pie was pushed out of the limelight with all the fuss over cupcakes and donuts. But I'm here to say that pie is back. Americans are demanding more pie. Pie satisfies our sweet tooth and carries us on a journey for those "remember when" moments.



WHAT MAKES A GOOD PIE? THE CRUST OR THE FILLING?

I believe the crust is the most important component of the pie. It literally is the foundation. And if you don't have a good crust, than it's just a waste of calories. So, let's first talk about that perfect crust, which should be a golden-brown inspiration that is richly flavored and just salty enough to contrast a sweet filling. I like the texture to be as flaky as a croissant but still crisp. And once I take a bite of temptation, it should shatter, then melt away instantly on my tongue. This can only be accomplished with fat! I grew up on a basic crust that was tried-and-true, and simple to make. It is known as a 321 crust. 3 parts flour, 2 parts fat and 1 part water. It's a great crust, but like anything else, there are hundreds of variations. And today's chefs are pushing the limit when it comes to the fat. Some feel that "all-butter" crusts are the hands-down favorite. However, I know many swear by all lard (pork). I have been experimenting with a combination of fats, mainly because I didn't want to give up the sweet luscious flavor of the butter entirely. I have made crust using a 50/50 blend of butter and animal fat (pork lard) and also a 70/30 blend. After many crusts filled with memorable fillings (good thing I have an endless supply of in-house official taste testers at the corporate office), the favorite crust was the 70/30 blend. It baked up crisp, yet it was marvelously tender and flaky with just the perfect taste profile of butter and a mild hint of bacon that blended with every filling I added to it. If you really want to experiment out of the pie shell, try replacing the pork lard with duck lard. The crust will have a very light flavor, and texture will be a perfect balance between crisp and flaky. Just imagine the reaction from your customers when you tell them about your Honey Apple Pie with Thyme in a nontraditional duck fat crust. I'm thinking immediate sell at upscale pricing. A little duck fat can turn into big dollars!

If you are a non-traditionalist you can make pie crust from graham crackers, Oreo cookies, pretzels, and the list can go on. There really are no rules when it comes to the crust, other than it tastes good. But in the end, if you're not up to making your own crust, just ask your Maines Account Manager about our ready-made frozen pie shells and filled pies. Maines has ingredients for you to perfect the art of creating sweet comfort by the slice. Remember, a good piece of pie is like a hug from your mom or grandmother. The better the pie, the bigger the hugs.



Chef Jake Hizny

CRACK PIE

YIELD: 2 -10" Pies

INGREDIENTS

Cookie for Crust:

| | |
|--------|---------------------------|
| 381254 | 2/3 c. Flour, AP |
| 003200 | 1/8 tsp. Baking Powder |
| 003201 | 1/8 tsp. Baking Soda |
| 340620 | 1/4 tsp. Salt |
| 000110 | 1/2 c. Butter, softened |
| 380150 | 1/3 c. Brown Sugar, light |
| 380424 | 3 Tbl. Sugar, granulated |
| 092111 | 1 ea. Eggs, large |
| 325632 | 1 c. Rolled Oats |

Crust:

| | |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| See Recipe | Crumbled Cookie |
| 000110 | 1/4 c. Butter |
| 380150 | 1 1/2 Tbl. Brown Sugar, light |
| 340620 | 1/8 tsp. Salt |

Filling:

| | |
|------------|--|
| 380424 | 1 1/2 c. Sugar, granulated |
| 380150 | 7 oz. Brown Sugar, light |
| 340620 | 1/4 tsp. Salt |
| N/A | 1/3 c. Milk Powder |
| 000110 | 1 c. Butter, melted |
| 015500 | 7 oz. Heavy Cream |
| 350750 | 1 tsp. Vanilla Extract |
| 092111 | 8 ea. Eggs, large, yolks only |
| See Recipe | 2 ea. Prepared Crust |
| 380170 | As needed, 10X Powdered Sugar, garnish |

(Recipe continued on page 21)

By Chef Jake Hizny

NOW FOR THE PIE FILLING - FRESH OR PREPARED, YOU DECIDE!

Pie fillings generally contain fruit, custard, or cream. Prepared pie fillings are very convenient; however, they don't even come close to made-from-scratch fillings. There is nothing wrong

with using prepared filling, but I suggest that you use a high-quality filling. I have also discovered that by adding a few ingredients to a prepared filling,

you can create some unique flavor combinations. I have taken prepared apple pie filling and blended in plumped raisins and walnut pieces. I then filled a buttery pie crust, drizzled caramel sauce over the filling and topped it with a cinnamon crumbed topping. By adding a few ingredients, I created the perfect foundation for a spectacular pie, and I must say it is one of the best I've tasted.

This type of pie will also distinguish your operation from the competition.

For me, fruit fillings made from scratch are the way to go. You just need to follow the recipe to ensure the filling is properly thickened, and the cut edges of the

pie will ooze slightly. That is a great indicator that the filling is perfect. The fruit will also look clear and distinct, and the color will be bright. You won't get that from canned prepared filling.

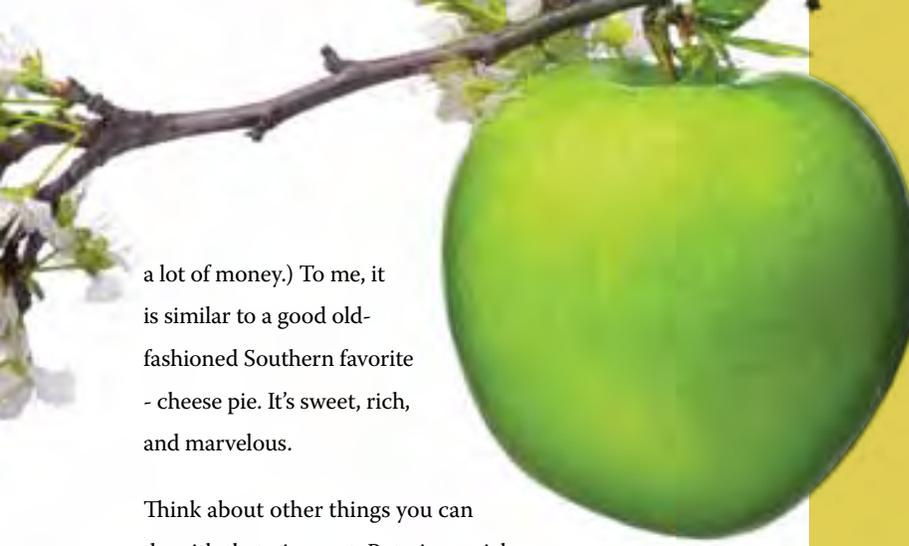
Cream fillings should be smooth, free of lumps, and rich in appearance. These fillings can be a base for a variety of pie options: chocolate-peanut butter cream pie, blueberry cream, coconut cream, and banana cream pie to mention a few. Pumpkin and sweet potato pie fill-

ings are a custard-type filling. In the oven, they will resemble a soufflé during the baking process, but once you take the pie out of the oven, it deflates back into its crust. Sometimes during the baking or cooling process, the pie will crack. Here is a great tip that a lifelong baker gave me years ago. Let the filling rest for approximately one hour before incorporating the eggs into the mixture. This little trick is the fix, and you won't have a problem with cracking.

In addition to the pies that we all grew up on, today's pie bakers are really thinking outside the box. They are incorporating different cultures and ingredients to come up with some really incredible creations. Recently, while in Houston, Texas I had a pie that was made with apples layered with roasted green chilies in a savory cheese-infused crust sprinkled with a streusel topping of walnuts and brown sugar. This baker took two of the basic ingredients from the Southwest and incorporated them into a pie that is savory, sweet, spicy, and somewhat earthy. It was incredible, and when I asked how it sold, the waiter told me it is the cornerstone of their dessert menu. Can you imagine - the cornerstone? Talk about putting distance between you and your competition.

Recently, I was in a restaurant in Washington, D.C., that is "known" for its apple pie. When I walked into the restaurant, I was looking down into the bakery. The pastry chef was hand-peeling Granny Smith apples for the next batch of pies. Its apple pies were "individual" sized, (but they were perfect if you wanted to share). Customers come to this restaurant for the PIE! One of the trendiest pies racing across America is a pie called "Crack Pie" (recipe included). I'm not sure how it got that name, but I'm thinking it's because you become addicted to it. In New York City, this pie is fetching a whopping price of \$44 for a 9-inch pie. It is made with an oatmeal cookie crust and the filling includes egg yolks, sugar, butter, and heavy cream. (Someone is making





a lot of money.) To me, it is similar to a good old-fashioned Southern favorite - cheese pie. It's sweet, rich, and marvelous.

Think about other things you can do with that pie crust. Pot pies, quiche, meat pasties, and deep-fried turnover pies are a few opportunities to utilize the crust. I get just as excited about savory pies as I do about their sweet cousins. There are few things more comforting than the marriage of meat and pastry. It's a work of bubbly goodness. You can create a traditional chicken pot pie or offer upscale versions such as Steak and Stilton pot pie or maybe a stone crab pot pie. A very unique offering that I had the pleasure to taste was a ham and cabbage pot pie. I had this pie at an Irish pub. It resembled the classic Shepherd's pie, and it was loaded with cabbage, onions, and ham and encrusted with mashed potatoes. Very yummy, inexpensive to make, low food cost, high profit, and unique to your operation and your customers.

I hope to see pie on your menu, not only because it is trendy, but because I'm sure your customers will accept it with open arms.

*Until next time,
Chef Jake*



DIRECTIONS

Cookie for Crust:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In a medium mixing bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer using the paddle attachment, beat the butter, brown sugar, and sugar until light and fluffy.
4. Whisk the egg into the butter mixture until fully incorporated.
5. With the mixer running, beat in the flour mixture, a little at a time, until fully combined. Stir in the oats until incorporated.
6. Spread the mixture onto a baking sheet and bake until golden brown and set, approximately 20 minutes. Remove from heat and cool to the touch on a rack. Crumble the cooled cookie to use in the crust.

Crust:

1. Combine the crumbled cookie, butter, brown sugar, and salt in a food processor, and pulse until evenly combined and blended (a little of the mixture clumped between your fingers should hold together). Divide the crust between 2 (10-inch) pie tins. Press the crust into each shell to form a thin, even layer along the bottom and sides of the tins. Set the prepared crusts aside while you prepare the filling.

Filling:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the sugar, brown sugar, salt, and milk powder. Whisk in the melted butter, then whisk in the heavy cream and vanilla.
3. Gently whisk in the egg yolks, being careful not to add too much air.
4. Divide the filling evenly between the 2 prepared pie shells.
5. Bake the pies, one at a time, for 15 minutes, then reduce the heat to 325°F and bake until the filling is slightly jiggly and golden brown (similar to a pecan pie), about 10 minutes. Remove the pies and cool on a rack.
6. Refrigerate the cooled pies until well chilled. The pies are meant to be served cold, and the filling will be gooey. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.