

A perfect crust for Aunt Clara's Apple Crumb Pie



Apple Crumb Pie

Photos Susie Iventosch

By Susie Iventosch

My very favorite fruit pie crust recipe is one handed down from my great Aunt Clara. She was a phenomenal cook and a brilliant baker and whenever she babysat for us, which was often, she put her skills to work in the kitchen. Her crust calls for cider vinegar, which helps to keep the dough tender by slowing the development of gluten. It also helps the dough to maintain a nice bright color and prevents it from turning gray. And, finally, it gives the crust a great flavor.

Just like the biscuits we featured earlier in the summer, the key to making a good, flaky crust is to make sure all of the ingredients are cold. That's why you want to use very cold butter and ice

water. Some people even go so far as to put the flour and bowl along with the pastry cutter in the refrigerator for 30 minutes or so before making the dough. I don't do that, but I do use very cold butter and water. You can even refrigerate the dough for an hour or so, before rolling it out. I am usually in too much of a hurry to do that, and generally roll my dough out right away, and it seems to work just fine for me.

I'll share one other trick I came across by accident last time I made apple pie and this is regarding the pie filling. I peeled, cored and cut the apples, and went so far as to add the sugar and spices, before I was interrupted and had to leave them for a couple of hours. What I discovered when I returned to the project, was that some of the

juice had filtered down into the bottom of the bowl. While I didn't want to toss it, I was able to control how much of the liquid I put back in when filling the pie crust with the fruit. I usually toss some flour in with the apples to prevent the filling from being too soupy, but didn't need as much this time around.

Just yesterday, I bought freshly picked apples at the Farmers' market, so this recipe should be just in time for the fall apple harvest! You can make your pies ahead of time and freeze them for the fall holidays, either baked or unbaked, but be sure to do a little research on the best methods of freezing for each and how long you should keep them frozen before eating them.



How to freeze an unbaked apple pie:
<http://thepieacademy.com/how-to-freeze-an-apple-pie-before-baking/>
 How to freeze a baked apple pie:
<http://thepieacademy.com/how-to-freeze-an-apple-pie-before-baking/>
 Nonstick pie drip catcher:
www.randm.us/shop/bakeware/2737-pie-drip-catcher-non-stick/

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This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

Aunt Clara's Pie Crust

(Makes a single crust for bottom with a little leftover for making cinnamon-butter roll ups! Double if you prefer a full top crust instead of a crumb topping.)

INGREDIENTS

2 cups flour
 ½ teaspoon salt
 1½ cubes unsalted (very cold) butter, cut into small cubes
 2 teaspoons cider vinegar
 ¼-½ cup ice water (use a little at a time until all of the flour is incorporated into the dough.)

DIRECTIONS

Mix flour and salt in a large bowl. With a pastry cutter, crumble butter into flour until well incorporated. Sprinkle cider vinegar over mixture and toss with a fork. Add ice-cold water, a little at a time and blend with fork until dough is moist enough to roll into a ball, but not too wet. Roll into one large ball for the pie crust and a smaller ball to use for patching your crust, or cinnamon roll ups for snacking! At this point, you can flatten the ball into a disc and wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes to an hour, or roll it out right away.

To roll out, use a well-floured board and rolling pin and roll into a large circle, big enough to fill your pie dish (approximately 14-15 inches or so, depending upon the size of your pie dish) including a fluted edge at the top. Brush off any extra flour. Fold the circle in half or quarters and place in the center of the pie dish and open back into a circle and fit snugly into the bottom and sides of the dish, leaving an extra inch or two hanging over the edge. Roll this extra dough back toward the top of the pie dish and into a nice rolled edge. Use extra dough from your second ball if you need it to fill in any gaps. Flute this edge with your fingertips. Refrigerate until ready to fill and bake.

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INGREDIENTS

1 recipe Aunt Clara's Pie Crust (see recipe nearby)
 8-10 large, firm, tart apples (Granny Smith or Pippin) or a combination of firm tart and sweet (Pink Lady and Jonagold)
 ½ cup brown sugar
 ¼ cup white sugar
 ¼-½ cup all-purpose flour
 1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
 ½ teaspoon cardamom
 Crumb topping:
 1 cube ice cold butter
 ¾ cup flour
 2/3 cup brown sugar
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 ¼ teaspoon cardamom
 ¼ teaspoon nutmeg (optional)
 Place all ingredients in bowl and using fingertips or pastry cutter, work dries into butter until crumbly.

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 F. Peel, core and slice apples into ½-inch slices. Toss with sugar, spices and flour. Dump into prepared, unbaked pie crust and top with crumb topping. If you have a pie drip catcher, use it! (See link in info box.) It will save your oven from baked-on fruit filling. Place pie on drip catcher and bake for 45-50 minutes, or until top is golden brown and apples are al dente, but a knife easily pierces. Serve with ice cream, frozen yogurt or my favorite ... a slice of extra-sharp cheddar cheese!



Family Focus

Some Do's and Don'ts for Divorcing Couples, Part 2

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

We've all seen examples of how ugly and bitter divorces can be in movies and in reality. Vindictive behavior can range from manipulative and destructive to downright absurd. I know of one husband who slashed the tires on his soon-to-be ex-wife's car and smeared dog poop on the windshield, and a wife who sold her estranged husband's prized golf clubs on Craigslist. Needless to say, these couples were not heading for a smooth divorce.

In continuing to look at the difficulties and heartache many go through in a divorce, here are some recommendations for what not to do when divorcing, especially when children are involved. It is important to make your children your highest priority. Many of these "don'ts" may be familiar, but practicing them is a lot harder than reading about them.

1) Never badmouth the other parent to your children, even when they're grown. You will sacrifice their well-being and ability to hold their parents in high regard just for a few moments of your own satisfaction and vindication. If you truly love your children, you will work on exercising complete self-control with them. Find those with whom you can release your hurt and anger in confidence, such as a highly trustworthy friend, a spiritual advisor or a therapist.

2) Don't reveal private in-

formation about your marital relationship and dissolution to your children. Don't discuss your personal feelings about your former partner or your divorce, or for that matter, your personal life in general. These are your children, not your friends. Even when they are adults, there is no positive rationale for revealing details to them about your relationship with their other parent.

3) Even while you refrain from discussing blame or details of the divorce with your children, don't allow them to be exposed to your adult issues by others, such as your friends or relatives. This is why it is important to confide only in those who can be trusted not to reveal what you have told them.

4) Don't disrupt your kids so they have to constantly pack up to go to each parent. Arrange for them to have the whole school week at one location if possible. Splitting their time so they have two days here and three days there is always a hardship and sacrifice for children. Or, as mentioned in the previous column, consider nesting as a way to proceed. Look out for their needs over your own. You may not get to spend as much time with them as you would like or feels fair, but if you are subordinating your own needs to theirs, you will be a true hero.

5) Don't introduce your children to another romantic liaison in your life or move in with someone else right away. Wait as long as possible. When their world suddenly feels pre-

carious, they need to know that they come first to each of their parents. Proceed slowly and discreetly.

6) Do not mention or allude to your children that you received unfair financial treatment as a result of your divorce. Just as money matters are the number one source of friction for married couples, so too are finances high on the list of divorcing couples' struggles with each other. It is especially difficult if prior to your divorce you were in a position of being able to do more for your children financially. You can let your children know you still want to be able to send them to camp or pay for new clothes, and that you will save up for these expenditures.

7) Don't avoid talking to your ex when you encounter each other at your children's school, sports and other events. Try to prevent awkward, strained situations for the sake of your children. Ideally, you and your ex will be able to communicate well with each other and unite for family activities that are important to your children. Therapists work not only with intact couples, but also with divorcing and divorced couples who are trying to sort out their relationships with each other going forward. If you and your ex have a cold war mentality with each other, it is important to seek assistance.

8) Do not turn to large quantities of alcohol, food, or other substances to deal with your distress over your divorce. It is important for you to

take good care of yourself for your own sake, of course, but also for your children's. You are still a role model for them, as well as one of the people they count on most in the world. They have already experienced a major disruption in their lives, and it is important not to compound their lives further with negative issues that can be avoided. Get help quickly if you are heading in a self-destructive direction.

9) Don't let yourself remain in a low state of mind for too long. Initially, you may well feel depressed, anxious, and extremely emotional. You may not feel that you can control your emotions, which can range from sadness to anger to embarrassment to worry. Many people feel that they have failed. Even if you are relieved to be out of an unhappy marriage, there is usually a sense of loss. But eventually you can recover, with or without outside assistance. Remember that you are showing your children not only how to handle loss, but also how to handle adversity. They will take their cues from you and your ex. You want them to be happy, thriving individuals of course, so keep them in the forefront at all times.

10) Try not to worry about the divorce interfering with your children's ability to flourish. After the initial adjustment period, they can certainly have the potential to be happy and successful in all areas of their lives. Even if your ex doesn't cooperate in the ways that are listed above, you can make a

huge difference. If you can set a good example for them, your children will have at least one strong role model.

11) At the same time, don't put all of the responsibility for your children's emotional well-being on yourself. If you see significant changes in a child's behavior, such as withdrawal from people and activities, emotional volatility, nightmares, defiance, turning to substances, or other concerning changes, don't hesitate to get help. School counselors, family therapists, and groups for children of divorce are some available sources of support.



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