

The Professor's Apple Pie

Courtesy of Brenden Rensink
<https://www.bwrensink.org/?p=888>



This is the last apple pie you will ever make. The filling features rubbed sage, cardamom, and browned butter, and the buttery flaky crust is enhanced by a savory hint of gouda cheese

Portioned to be cooked in a 12-inch Le Creuset enameled cast iron skillet

Crust Ingredients

- 4 cups flour
- 1 3/4 cups fancy unsalted Irish Butter (cubed small, chilled)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup water (iced, as cold as possible)
- 1 oz finely shredded age (not smoked) Gouda cheese

Filling Ingredients

- 2 lbs Golden Delicious or Opal apples, peeled cored and sliced thin (purchase 3 cups)
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 TB rubbed sage (Not ground. If fresh, mince as small as possible and mash/rub to release herb's oils and fragrance)
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/8 cup corn starch
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground cardamom
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup fancy unsalted Irish Butter (browned, chilled, cubed or shaved)

Assembly Ingredients

- 4 tsp turbinado sugar
- 1 tsp flour
- 1 egg
- 1 TB water

1. Pie Crust Preparation:

- Chill all ingredients, mixing bowl and paddle, and skillet in refrigerator before mixing and during any breaks between steps. Keep it all COLD to prevent butter from melting.
- Combine flour and cubed butter with kitchen mixer & paddle into small coarse crumbs.
- Mix in finely shredded Gouda cheese (age, but not smoked).
- Keep mixing on low and slowly add iced water.
- Divide 2/3 of dough into a large ball and remaining 1/3 into a small ball (flour hands if needed).
- Press each ball into 1- to 2-inch high disks (flour table surface if needed), place on a lightly-floured baking sheet, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight.

2. Pie Filling Preparation

- Peel and core apples, slice THIN.
- Combine 2 lbs. apple slices with lemon juice in large bowl.
- Mix granulated sugar, rubbed sage, ground nutmeg, cinnamon, and cardamom, salt, brown sugar, and corn starch in separate bowl.
- Combine apples with sugar mixture, mix thoroughly to fully incorporate and aggressively to mash and soften apples a bit.
- Chill finished filling in refrigerator for at least 1 hour.
- Melt ¼ cup butter in saucepan, cook at medium heat and stir continually for 5-10 minutes until butter foams and milk solids lightly brown. Continue stirring for another minute but not so long that browned milk solids burn. Pour into bowl and mix so browned bits are evenly distributed. Chill in refrigerator until fully solid.

3. Assembly Instructions

- Chill 12-inch cast iron skillet in refrigerator.
- Flour work surface and hands.
- Use rolling pin to slowly roll out large dough ball into 16-inch circle.
- Carefully lift and place into skillet. Gently press edges of bottom crust into the curve and up the edge of the skillet. This should leave 2 inches hanging out over the edge. Leaving 1 inch hanging over the edge (to use later for crimping pie shut), trim remainder of extra dough from edges. Save for decorations.
- Combine 2 tsp turbinado sugar with 1 tsp flour and spread evenly across bottom crust.
- Place chilled pie filling evenly in bottom crust.
- Scrape browned butter from chilled bowl into cubes or small shavings. Evenly distribute browned butter bit among the apple filling, pressing down between apples.
- Use rolling pin to slowly roll out small dough ball into 12-inch circle.
- Carefully lift and place in skillet. It should reach to the edges.
- Fold excess bottom crust up and inward, crimping with fingers to all along edge. Crimped pattern should cover any gap between upper crust and edge.
- Roll out saved excess dough into thin shapes to decorate top of pie.
- Use sharp thin knife (paring knife works well) to cut decorative patterns into top crust. Evenly distribute 6-8 cuts that fully puncture top crust (other shallow cuts don't have to go all the way through). These deeper cuts provide venting for pie and will widen a bit during cooking.
- Mix egg with water and brush lightly over surface of pie.

4. Cooking Instructions

- Position oven rack to middle position and preheat oven to 450 degrees.
- Place skillet on baking sheet (in case any filling bubbles out and over).
- Cook at 450 for 20 minutes, or until top crust is golden brown.
- Reduce heat to 350 degrees, cover loosely with foil and cook for 60 additional minutes.
- Remove from oven and sprinkle with remaining 2 tsp turbinado sugar.
- Let cool on counter for a few hours. Hot pie is too sloppy to serve. Wait for it to cool so it can be cut and served intact.