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Recipes from *The Apple Lover's Cookbook* by Amy Traverso. Published W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, NY. Copyright 2011. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

Blue Ribbon Deep-Dish Apple Pie

Makes 8 servings – Active Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes – Total Time: 2 hours, 45 minutes

When it comes to apple pie, the more fruit the merrier. Except the more apples you pile into the dish, the more likely you are to end up with a big gap between the crust, which sets early in the baking, and the filling, which softens and shrinks by the time the pie is done. The answer, in a technique I adapted from *Cook's Illustrated* magazine, is to pre-cook the apples just a bit to “set” their shape. The result is a pie that’s good enough for a bake-off:

APPLE NOTES: Again, any combination of firm-tart and firm-sweet apples is fine. But, as with the classic Double Crust Apple Pie, I particularly like Northern Spy, Sierra Beauty, and Esopus Spitzenberg for tartness, and Ginger Gold, Golden Delicious, Jazz, and Jonagold for sweetness.

MAKE-AHEAD TIP: You can prepare the crust through step 1 and refrigerate for up to five days. You can also freeze the dough for up to three months. Defrost overnight in the refrigerator before using.

EQUIPMENT: 5- to 6-quart Dutch Oven or other large, heavy-bottomed pot; parchment paper; 9-inch deep-dish pie plate (preferably glass); baking sheet (any size)

FOR THE CRUST:

2-1/2 cups (360g) all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons granulated sugar, divided
1 teaspoon kosher salt
18 tablespoons (2-1/4 sticks; 255 g) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
6 to 8 tablespoons (90 to 120 ml) ice water
Milk for brushing over crust

FOR THE FILLING:

2-1/2 pounds (1.13 kg, or about 5 large) firm-tart apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 1/2-inch thick wedges
2-1/2 pounds (1.13 kg or about 5 large) firm-sweet apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 1/2-inch wedges
1/3 cup (70 g) granulated sugar
2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
1-1/2 tablespoons (22 ml) freshly squeezed lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1-1/2 tablespoons cornstarch

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1. First, make the crust: In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, 2 tablespoons of the sugar, and salt until well combined. Sprinkle the butter cubes over the flour mixture and use your fingers to work them in (you want to rub your thumb against your finger tips, smearing the better as you do). Stop when the mixture looks like cornmeal with some pea-sized bits of butter remaining. Sprinkle 6 tablespoons ice water on top and stir with a fork until the dough begins to come together. If needed, add 1 or 2 tablespoons more of ice water. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead three times, or just enough to make a cohesive dough – do not overmix! Gather the dough into a ball, then divide into two pieces, one slightly larger than the other. Press each piece into a disk and wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 425° F and set a rack to the lowest position. Meanwhile, prepare the filling: In a Dutch oven over medium heat, stir the apples with the sugar, brown sugar, lemon juice, cinnamon, and salt. Cook, stirring gently, until the apples just begin to turn tender, about 10 minutes. Reduce the heat if apples begin to sizzle vigorously.
3. Remove the apples from the heat, stir in the cornstarch, and spread the apples out on a large baking sheet. Put in the freezer to cool to room temperature, 12 to 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, unwrap the larger disk of dough and put it in the center of a large sheet of parchment paper. Cover with a second piece of parchment. Roll out, working from the center, to a 13-inch circle. Peel off the top piece of parchment and transfer the dough to a pie plate, peeled side down. Peel off the remaining parchment and press the crust into the plate, draping any excess over the sides. Unwrap the smaller disk of dough and put it in the center of a large sheet of parchment paper. Cover with a second piece of parchment. Roll out, working from the center, to an 11-inch circle. Set aside.
5. Remove the apples from the freezer, and use a spatula to transfer them, with any juices, into the pie plate. Peel the parchment off the top crust. Transfer, peeled side down, to the pie, then peel off the remaining parchment and, using a sharp knife, make three slashes in the crust to allow steam to escape. Fold the bottom crust up over the top crust and crimp to seal. If you don't have a favorite decorative crimping technique, you can always simply pinch the crust between your thumb and forefinger at regular intervals around the crust, but I like to make a scalloped edge by holding my right thumb and forefinger in a "U" shape, then poking the crust between them using my left forefinger. Brush the crust all over with milk and sprinkle with remaining sugar.
6. *Put the pie on a baking sheet and bake on the lowest rack for 10 minutes. Reduce the heat to 350° F and bake until the pie is golden brown, another 40 to 50 minutes. Let cool on a rack for at least 45 minutes before serving.*