

Peach-Almond Rustic Pie

Makes a 9-inch pastry; serves 6-8

Summer stone fruits are botanically related to the almond nut, so it's very natural that the flavors of the two match so well when paired. We've experimented with how to blend peach and almond flavors by using almond paste in the filling of a rustic-style pie. The filling layer is thinner than a typical pie, so the pastry element needs to be wonderful and delicious. We've used one of our favorite crusts that features a cream cheese base that's easy to work with and delicious to eat! The rustic nature of this pie allows it to assemble quickly while creating a stunning table presentation.

Cream Cheese Crust Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
8 oz. (1 pkg) cream cheese
1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks), well chilled

Filling Ingredients:

5-6 summer ripe peaches (or apricots, or plums)
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
7 oz. almond paste, grated

Topping Ingredients:

1 egg water, with teaspoons water
2 tablespoons coarse sugar

Directions:

The crust may be mixed by hand or with a food processor. Choose your preferred method, then continue forming the crust at Step 6.

Mixing by Hand:

- 1a. Mix the flour, sugar, and salt together in a large bowl with a whisk until evenly distributed.
- 2a. Cut the butter and cream cheese into 1/2-inch cubes. Use a little of the flour mixture to keep the pieces from sticking together. Chill the cubes for 15 minutes.
- 3a. Place the butter and cream cheese cubes in the flour mixture. Using a simple pastry blender, cut the butter, cream cheese, and flour mixture together until a coarse texture is reached with some pea-sized pieces of butter and/or cream cheese remaining.

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4a. Form the rough dough into a ball using your hands and a light touch.

5a. Flatten the dough ball into a disk about a half-inch thick, wrap in plastic wrap, and chill.

Mixing with a Food Processor:

1b. Place the flour, sugar, and salt in the bowl of the food processor. Pulse a few times to evenly distribute the sugar and salt.

2b. Cut the butter and cream cheese into 1/2-inch cubes. Use a little of the flour mixture to keep the pieces from sticking together. Chill the cut butter and cream cheese cubes for 15 minutes.

3b. Place the butter and cream cheese cubes in the food processor with the flour mixture. Pulse 6-8 times to cut the butter and cream cheese into the flour. The dough mixture will be coarse with some pea-sized pieces of butter and cream cheese remaining. (Resist the urge to keep pulsing.)

4a. Remove the rough dough from the work bowl and form into a ball using your hands and a light touch.

5b. Flatten the dough ball into a disk about a half-inch thick, wrap in plastic wrap, and chill.

Assembling:

6. Chill the wrapped dough disk for an hour or overnight.

7. When ready to assemble, remove the dough from the refrigerator, and allow to soften slightly until it's easy to roll.

8. Meanwhile, stir the cornstarch and sugar together, then sprinkle over the sliced peaches. Gently toss the fruit to distribute the cornstarch/sugar mixture. Set aside while finishing crust preparation.

9. Roll the dough into a rough circle approximately 15" in diameter to a 1/8- to 3/16-inch thickness on a lightly floured surface.

10. Transfer the dough to a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet (something that will catch any juices that might escape during baking).

11. Coarsely grate the almond paste. Gently toss with the peach mixture. Place the peach and almond filling in the center of the dough and spread leaving a 3-inch margin clear on all sides.

12. Fold the crust over the filling. Beat the egg white with 2 teaspoons of water, and brush lightly on the crust top. Sprinkle the coarse sugar on the crust.

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13. Bake the pie in a 400°F oven. Baking times will vary greatly based on the crust thickness, and the depth of the filling. Bake for 20 minutes and check the progress. Look for browning of the crust and bubbling of the fruit in the center. If additional baking is required, loosely place a square of foil on top to keep the crust from over-browning. Continue to check to check progress every 7 minutes – check for a golden crust and bubbling fruit in the center. Baking time may take up to a total of 40 minutes, again depending on the pie depths. Cool the pie on the baking pan on a cooling rack. The filling will continue to thicken as it cools.

14. Serve warm or cooled with your favorite ice cream or with whipped cream topping.