Aunt Laura's Lemon Pie



Description

Super lemony luscious lemon meringue pie the way Aunt Laura made it. It's the best.

Ingredients

Crust
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup butter (or 1/4 cup crisco and 1/4 cup butter)
- 3 tbsp ice water
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar

Filling
- 2 cups sugar (for filling)
- 6 tbsp cornstarch
- 6 tbsp flour (for filling)
- 6 egg yolks (separated from egg whites)
- 1 cup frehly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 tsp salt (for filling)
- 2 2/3 cups water (boiling)
- zest from 3 or 4 lemons

Meringue
- 6 eggwhites at room temperature (separated from egg yolks)
- 3/4 tsp cream of tartar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 pinch lemon zest (leftover from filling)

Instructions

CRUST (for a 9" pie)
Mix flour, salt and sugar together. Cut butter into small pieces (1/2") and cut into dry mixture using two knives or pastry cutter, until it looks like course cornmeal with chunks of butter the size of a pea. Drip 1 TBSP ice water at a time until mixture begins to hold together. Keeping it as crumbly as possible makes a tender crust. Gently press into a ball, wrap in wax paper and chill for at least 1/2 hour.

Heat oven to 450 degrees. On a large square of wax paper, pat dough into about a 5 or 6 inch round. Place another large square of wax paper on top, and roll dough out until it is at least 12" round. Roll from the center to the edges. Edges can be scraggly - it's okay because you can patch them once the dough is in the pie plate.

Remove top wax paper and invert pie plate over dough and turn over so that the bottom wax paper is on top. Carefully peel off wax paper and fit the dough into the bottom of the pie plate. Fold edges and pinch to make the crust deeper, patch where necessary, and you can make a ripple edge by pressing one finger all around. Prick the bottom and sides of the crust every two or three inches with a fork to let the air out while it bakes.

For a two crust pie, double the recipe, and refrigerate two dough balls instead of one. I roll my dough directly on my granite (or marble) sink top. If you choose not to use the wax paper, lightly flour the surface and your rolling pin. No extra flour is needed with the wax paper (or plastic wrap) method. I actually use 18" wide plastic wrap from Costco.

Bake at 450 for 12 to 15 minutes until it is barely golden brown.

FILLING

Separate yolks from the whites of 6 eggs and set aside. The whites should go into a bowl large enougjh to be beaten into the meringue.

Grate zest from 3 or 4 lemons. Squeeze 1 cup of juice from fresh lemons. Set asside.

In a saucepan, mix the sugar, cornstarch, flour and salt together. Add 2-2/3 cup boiling water and cook until thick. Add the six egg yolks and cook until you feel yolks are cooked and mixture is very thick. Add the lemon juice and the lemon zest. Place mixture in baked pie shell and let cool while you make the meringue.

MERINGUE
Whip 6 egg whites at room temperature until frothy. Add 3/4 tsp Cream of Tartar and whip until stiff. Continue to whip adding one tbsp of sugar at a time. Beat in 1 tsp vanilla extract and a little extra lemon zest if you still have some leftover.

Turn eggwhites onto the pie and gently spread the sides to touch the crust. Bake for about 15 minutes at 325 degrees until some of the meringue peaks are golden brown.

Notes

Mimi's note: Laura's recipe gives no directions for the cruist, and very little for the pie filling. I've carefully detailed all the steps so that if you've never made a pie in your life, you can do it easily. It's not the quickest - I baked the crust the night before and left it at room temperature, uncovered.

To make the whole thing easy, lay out all your bowls and utensils, as well as all the ingredients before you start. You should work with room temperature eggs. Have fun!