

Our State eats

Published in the November 2021 issue of Our State



Apple Cider Caramel Dumpling Pie

- ½ gallon apple cider
- 6 flavorful fall apples
- A couple tablespoons raisins or dried cranberries (plump in brandy, if you like)
- ⅓ cup cider syrup (or a good drizzle of honey)
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- Cinnamon if you must, but this pie sings best without
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Splash of apple brandy, cider, or water
- Piecrust for a 9-inch pie (homemade is best!)
- Cream or milk (for brushing crust)
- Granulated sugar (for sprinkling on crust)

For the syrup: Pour cider into a heavy-bottomed pot and slowly simmer about 30 to 45 minutes, uncovered, until reduced to about 1 cup. Watch carefully at the end so it doesn't scorch. Can be stored in freezer for up to a year.

For the pie: Preheat oven to 400°. You will need one good, firm apple per person. Peel and core the apples and place them in a 9-inch pie plate.

Into each apple hole, poke a bit of dried fruit. Drizzle apples with cider syrup, sprinkle with brown sugar (and cinnamon, if using), then dot with butter. Add a glug (a couple of tablespoons) of apple brandy, water, or cider to bottom of baking dish. Top pie with crust and crimp edges, anchoring dough well to edges of pie plate. Poke a hole through the dough over the center of each apple. Brush the top with cream or milk and sprinkle with granulated sugar.

To bake, place in bottom third of oven. After 10 minutes, reduce heat to 375° and bake until innards bubble and crust is golden brown, about 30 minutes depending on size of apples. Cover with foil if browning too quickly.

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Barb's Butter Piecrust

**2½ cups unbleached
all-purpose flour**

Scant teaspoon fine sea salt

**8 ounces (2 sticks) cold
unsalted butter**

**About 1½ teaspoons lemon juice
or cider vinegar stirred into
½ cup ice-cold water
(plus more as needed)**

In a bowl, combine flour and salt. Cut the butter into ½-inch cubes and divide into two piles. Add one pile to your flour mixture and blend quickly

with fingertips until it's the texture of cornmeal. (Pop into freezer a minute if your mixture is not cold to touch.) Add the other pile of butter cubes. Use a pastry cutter or fingertips to cut the butter into the flour until the fat is the size of peas. Combine the lemon juice or vinegar with the water and sprinkle enough of the liquid into your flour mixture that a little of the dough holds together when pressed. Look for moist crumbs.

The Schmear, or *fraisage*, for extra flakiness (entirely optional): This step only works if your butter is still cold; if

not, freeze dough for a few minutes. Toss the cold dough pieces onto the counter and divide into two piles. Take the first pile of crumbs and make a line across the bottom of your board. Using the heel of your hand, schmeare the crumbs across the board and then stack the flattened smears. Form into a patty, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight or up to three days. Repeat with the second pile of crumbs.

Skip the Schmear? Divide your moistened dough into two piles and wrap each in plastic wrap. Flatten your packets lightly with a rolling pin.

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