



Passion FOR PIE

AT CAFES AND DINERS ACROSS KANSAS, PIE IS MORE THAN A MERE DESSERT—IT'S A PROUD TRADITION

After some great barbecue, or any good meal, there are no sweeter words for a dessert-lover than, “Keep your fork—there’s pie!”

What is it about pie that sparks such excitement? A pie is nothing more than a simple crust filled with creamy or fruity yumminess. Right? Well, technically, yes. But, emotionally, there is a lot more to a slice of pie than the list of ingredients on a recipe card.

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Photography by Jason Dailey



recipe: Ladybird Diner

SALTED CARAMEL APPLE PIE

Use your favorite double crust for a 9-inch pie plate.

For the filling:

- 3 pounds apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
- 1/4 pound (1 stick) butter, melted
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

For the caramel:

- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter (softened)
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons flaked sea salt

Instructions

- In a medium saucepan, melt white sugar over low heat until it registers 380 degrees on a candy thermometer.
- Remove from heat and add the 2 tablespoons of butter, stirring constantly (caramel will bubble and seize, but press on—it will relax as you coax it), stir in heavy cream and salt. Set aside.
- In a large mixing bowl, coat sliced apples with cornstarch, brown sugar and cinnamon.
- Add to melted butter in a large saucepan. Stir over medium heat until apples begin to soften and sauce begins to thicken.
- Transfer apple mixture to pie plate lined with bottom crust.
- Spoon salted caramel mixture over top of apples.
- Top with upper crust and crimp as desired. Vent top crust.
- Brush top crust with egg wash or heavy cream and dust with white sugar for an added crunch!
- Bake in preheated 400-degree oven for 45 minutes or until apple filling is bubbling through vents and crust is nicely browned. Cool and enjoy!

Pie can take us back to our childhood and to a time when someone—our mother or maybe a grandmother—made us this special treat. It is part of our history. The women, and even some of the men, who first settled the prairie of Kansas brought their treasured pie recipes with them. It was a way of serving fruits and even some vegetables and meats in an easy-to-handle container—a crust.

Today, however, pie triggers memories of simpler times: of lazy summer picnics with a cool slice of coconut cream to top off the fried chicken, or of family dinners with tables groaning under the weight of turkeys and hams, but where everyone checks out the pies before sitting down so they know how much room to leave for their favorite slice.

And everyone has a favorite slice of pie. Maybe it was Grandma’s cherry, with a little extra tartness to it, or Aunt

Pauline’s gooey and sweet pecan pie. Whatever the flavor, pie is the star of the meal and is—well, as American as apple pie.

MAKING IT FLAKY

The foundation of a pie is the crust, and the flakier the better. Although most pie bakers are happy to share their recipes for the filling, many of which have been passed down through generations, there are few who will give up their recipes for the crust.

To make a perfectly flaky crust takes a lot of trial and error, and it is rare that piecrust masters will give up their well-learned and treasured secrets.

But once it’s made, that crust is filled with a favorite fruit or cream. Sounds simple, but a good pie is not easy to make; it is a very labor-intensive process. That is another reason pie is such a treat: It takes time, effort, knowledge and a lot of patience to make a great pie.