

## Easy as Pie!

According to an old American tradition, the mark of a good cook is their ability to make a delicious pie. Summer is all about fruit, and pies top the list for a great fruit-filled dessert that is flavor packed, and encased in a deliciously flaky crust. At Grandma's Pantry, we have just the right ingredients to help you make that scrumptious filling and flaky pie crust.

First, let's look into the helpful ingredients that will make that all important flaky pie crust. Pie and pastry flour, both regular and whole wheat, are a great start, but all-purpose flour works well too, so long as the flour is a soft wheat flour. Pie and pastry flour is low in gluten, absorbs less liquid, and is made from soft red winter or soft white wheat. Whole wheat pastry flour has the same characteristics but the difference lies in the fact that the bran of the wheat remains in the flour for naturally added nutrition. Both are helpful to ensure that light and flaky pie crust that guarantees great reviews. Once the basics of a standard pie crust are mastered, branch out and consider other ingredients that may vary the flavor, like cinnamon, orange peel, or finely chopped nuts. Or perhaps a graham cracker, gingersnap or other cookie flavored crumb crust will kick up the flavor of your pie. Use your imagination and don't be afraid to try new twists to the old favorite pie crust.

To get the best filling for a fruit pie, there are a few thickening products to consider. Starch thickeners are silky powders that can thicken juices to a nice transparent, glistening sheen without adding fat or flavor.

ClearJel, Instant ClearJel and Thermflo are modified cornstarch thickeners that many commercial bakers use for their pies. ClearJel is the product to use if you are planning to can your own home-made pie fillings. It is the only thickener that the USDA recommends for home canning. ClearJel works well with acidic ingredients, can tolerate high temperatures and doesn't cause pie fillings to weep when stored. However, regular ClearJel is not recommended if filling is to be frozen because it tends to break down when frozen and thawed. Instant ClearJel and Thermflo are similar in that they both can thicken without cooking, work well with acidic ingredients, can handle high temperatures, are freezer stable and pie fillings that use these products do not weep during storage. Thermflo is popular with those who like to can their own pie fillings; however, Instant ClearJel is not recommended for canning.

Another option for thickening pie fillings is tapioca. Tapioca granules are small, starchy grains that don't dissolve completely when cooked, so pies thickened with them have tiny gelatinous balls. (Instant tapioca or tapioca starch would eliminate the balls, because it is finely ground). This starch thickens at a lower temperature and stays stable when frozen. To use in a pie filling, when mixed with the other ingredients, let it sit for 5 minutes to soak up some of the liquid.

For those of you who just don't have the time to fuss with the filling, we carry a few pie fillings that are ready to go, just open the package and pour it in your crust. Available fillings

are apple, apricot, blueberry, cherry, lemon, peach, pineapple, red raspberry, strawberry and Bavarian cream.

All of the products mentioned above can be found here at Grandma's Pantry. Let us help you make a delicious pie that will tantalize the taste buds of your family and friends. It's as easy as pie!

***“So, whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*** (I Cor. 10:31)