



ALEXIS I BROWN

Writing Sample

Blog Post about Apple Pie – Part 1 of a 6-Part Series

Every holiday season, whenever I am asked what I would like to have at that holiday meal, my answer is always “pie.” Warm or cool. With ice cream, whipped cream, heavy cream, or melted cheddar cheese. With a top or without. Fruit or custard. Savory or sweet. As dessert or breakfast. No matter how or when I eat it, pie always makes me smile. I’ll share some iconic recipes. Maybe one of these will pique your fancy and make it to your holiday dinner table.

This recipe is based on one by Kieran Baldwin, a pastry chef at The Dutch in New York City. It was modified by Sam Sifton, when he wrote a piece for the New York Times in 2012. I came upon [this modification](#) of Sam’s, by [From the Family Table](#) who said “The key to the pie’s success is cooking the filling before you put it in the pie. I added lemon juice and a good splash of Calvados. Cream instead of the usual egg wash gives the pie a nice sheen. I also increased the cornstarch so that the filling became custard-like. For that reason, it is extremely important to let the pie cool completely before you serve it. Also, use a glass pie pan if you can. Everything seems to bake more evenly. Confession: I used a commercial pie crust. If you’re a purist, make your own.”



Apple Pie

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided

- 5 large Jonagold apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 8 wedges each
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon corn starch
- juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Calvados
- 1 carton commercial ready-made pie crusts (2 discs)
- Cream
- 1 tablespoon turbinado sugar

Preparation

1. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the prepared apple slices and stir until they are well covered with butter.
2. Combine the sugar, nutmeg, cinnamon and salt. Sprinkle over the apples and stir until the apples are completely coated. Continue to sauté until the apples are softened and the coating begins to caramelize. Sprinkle in the flour and cornstarch. Stir and cook until the mixture is smooth, about 3-5 minutes.
3. Stir in the lemon juice and Calvados. Transfer to a bowl and cool completely.
4. When you are ready to assemble the pie, remove the pie crusts from the refrigerator. Line a glass pie plate with one of the crust circles. Fill with the apple mixture, mounding it slightly in the middle. Dot with bits of the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter.
5. Paint the rim of the filled pie shell with cream. Top with the second crust circle and press the rim firmly to seal the crust. Turn the edge of the assembled crust under and crimp with a fork or your fingers. Paint the top crust of the pie with cream. Sprinkle with turbinado sugar. Cut 4 slits near the center of the pie. Lower-down slits will encourage the filling to bubble out during baking.
6. Place the pie on a rimmed baking sheet that has been preheated in the middle of a 425°F oven. Bake for 20 minutes. Reduce the heat to 375°F and continue to bake for an additional 30-40 minutes or until the pie is golden brown.
7. Remove to a cooling rack and allow to cool completely, 2 hours or more.
8. Serve with whipped cream, ice cream, or sharp Cheddar cheese.