

## Gouda Apple Pie

In every great cook's arsenal there is pie. And if you've never made one, the one to master is apple. It's the standard by which all American desserts are measured: flaky, buttery and salty on the outside and simultaneously tart and ever so sweet on the inside. Like a visit with Grandma, it covers the spectrum of emotions. The first step is how to make a killer crust. We're not gonna tell you to use a store-bought one here as they will never be as delicious. (You *could* if you're OK with making a *passable* pie, but what's the point of that?) The next step is all in your shopping. Buy tasty apples — one tart and firm (like Granny Smith) and one packed with flavor (like Honeycrisp, Fuji or Pink Lady) — and you'll have a tasty pie. Our twist is using grated aged Gouda in the crust. It's like wrapping the best of fall in a cheesy biscuit and serving it for dessert. Or breakfast, if you have leftovers.

See Cook's Note on how to choose apples and a geeky bit on why to use vodka for the crust.

Have all ingredients well-chilled for the best result.

### Ingredients

#### crust

2½ cups all-purpose flour (12 ounces), plus more for rolling

2 tablespoons sugar

¾ teaspoon fine salt

¾ cups finely grated aged Gouda (aged at least 3 years), grated on the medium holes of a box grater (2 ounces)

16 tablespoons chilled unsalted butter, preferably European style, cut into small dice

2 tablespoons vodka

3 to 4 tablespoons ice water, plus more if needed

#### filling

6 to 8 apples, peeled, cored and sliced ¼-inch thick (about 3½ pounds)

1 tablespoon lemon juice

½ cup sugar

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

Generous pinch fine salt

### **assembly**

1 tablespoon unsalted butter, diced

1 egg white, lightly beaten with 1 teaspoon of water

1 tablespoon coarse sugar, like demerara or turbinado, or use granulated sugar

### **special equipment**

One 9-inch pie pan, preferably glass

### **Directions**

#### ***for the crust***

#### ***HAND METHOD***

In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar and salt. Mix in grated cheese. Using a pastry blender or two knives, work the butter into the dry mixture until it resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle the vodka and 3 tablespoons of water over the surface, tossing with a fork until evenly moistened. Add more water, a teaspoon at a time, until dough holds together when pinched between fingers.

#### ***FOOD PROCESSOR METHOD***

In a food processor fitted with the metal blade, pulse the flour, sugar and salt to mix. Add the grated cheese and butter and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Drizzle in the vodka and 3 tablespoons of water and pulse until the mixture holds together when pinched between fingers. Add more water, a teaspoon at a time, if needed.

When the dough is mixed by one of the above methods, lightly flour a work surface and gather the dough into a ball. Divide into 2 balls, flatten each into a disk and wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least an hour. When the dough has nearly finished chilling, make the filling.

***for the filling***

In a very large bowl, toss the apple slices with the lemon juice. Sprinkle in the sugar, flour, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt and toss to coat evenly.

***to assemble***

Remove both dough disks from the refrigerator and let warm for a few minutes on the counter. Roll one disk to a 12-inch round on a lightly floured surface. Carefully lift the pastry and either drape it over a rolling pin or gently fold into quarters, then transfer to the pie pan and fit it in. Pile the apple mixture into the bottom pie crust, allowing the apples to mound in the center, and dot with butter.

Roll the remaining dough into a 14-inch round. Lift and drape over the apples. Seal the top and bottom crust edges together, trimming the overhang to 1/2-inch. Fold under and decoratively crimp the edges. Brush the top crust with the egg white mixture and sprinkle with the sugar. Cut several slits in the top of the crust to vent. Chill the pie in the fridge for 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

Place the pie on a foil-lined baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes. Lower the heat to 350 degrees and continue to bake until the crust is golden and the filling is bubbling, about 50 minutes (the apples should be tender when poked with a knife through a vent). Check the pie halfway through the cooking time and cover the edges of the crusts with foil if they start to darken.

Cool the pie on a wire rack for at least 30 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Cook's Notes:**

Using vodka or another high-proof alcohol in the crust produces a super-flaky and tender crust. Here's the science behind it: Vodka does not promote gluten formation the way water does. Working the pie dough too much will also promote gluten formation. Now, you want that gluten formation in bread to achieve that chewy texture, which is why bread dough needs to be

kneaded, but pie dough needs to be gently handled. Too much gluten will make the crust tough and heavy. So, remember, the less gluten, the flakier and more tender the crust will be.

**total time:** 3 hours 10 minutes (3 hours 15 minutes if dough is made by hand.) Does not include final cooling time of 30 minutes.

**active prep:** 45 minutes (dough using food processor), 50 minutes (by hand)

**chilling time:** 1 hour 15 minutes

**baking time:** 70 minutes

**makes: one 9-inch pie**

**difficulty: medium**