Mince pies

Shortcrust pies filled with a mincemeat of dried fruit, grated butter, spice and a Bramley apple, left a day to stand.

Makes
12 pies, with some mincemeat left over

Preparation
overnight

Cooking time
20 to 25 minutes
The mincemeat stands for 24 hours before the pies are made.

Kind
Pies and tarts

From
United Kingdom, England

Source
Mince pies, Thane Prince, BBC Food, 2013

Allergens

Contains
wheat (gluten): all-purpose flour
milk: butter
egg: egg yolks, eggs

Check the label for
sulphites: raisins, currants, candied peel

Suits vegetarians. Contains alcohol.

Worked out from the ingredients as written. Products differ, so read their labels. How allergens are worked out

Ingredients

For the mincemeat

- [ ] 1 cup raisins
- [ ] 1 cup currants
- [ ] 2¾ ounces candied peel, chopped
- [ ] 3 tablespoons brandy
- [ ] ⅔ cup butter, frozen, then grated
- [ ] 9 tablespoons dark brown sugar
  or muscovado sugar
- [ ] 1 vanilla bean, seeds scraped out (optional)
- [ ] 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- [ ] 1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and grated
  a Bramley's Seedling
- [ ] 1 orange, zest and juice
- [ ] 1 lemon, zest and juice

For the pastry

- [ ] 2¾ cups all-purpose flour
  and a little more for dusting
- [ ] ⅔ cup butter, unsalted, softened and cut into cubes
- [ ] 6½ tablespoons confectioners' sugar, sifted
- [ ] 1 orange, zest only
- [ ] 2 egg yolks
- [ ] 2 to 3 tablespoons water

To finish

- [ ] 2 eggs, beaten
- [ ] 1¾ ounces demerara sugar

You will need

- a large bowl

- a bun tin or a muffin tin
- two round pastry cutters, one a size smaller than the other
- a wire rack
- sterilised jars, for the mincemeat left over

Method

The day before

1. ☐ Put the raisins, currants, candied peel, brandy, butter, dark brown sugar and mixed spice into a large bowl with the cooking apple, the zest and juice of the orange and the lemon, and the seeds of the vanilla bean if you are using it. Stir until everything is evenly mixed.

2. ☐ Cover the bowl and set the mincemeat aside for 24 hours.

The pastry

3. ☐ Sift the all-purpose flour into a mixing bowl. Rub the butter lightly into it by hand, with the confectioners' sugar and the grated zest of the orange, until the mix is like coarse crumbs.

4. ☐ Work in the egg yolks, then the water, which helps the dough come together, and gather it gently into a soft ball.

5. ☐ Flatten the ball into a disc, wrap it and chill it in the fridge for 30 minutes.

The pies

6. ☐ Heat the oven to 350°F. Grease a bun tin, or a muffin tin if you want deeper pies.

7. ☐ On a lightly floured surface, roll the pastry out until it is about as thick as a pound coin.

8. ☐ Using a cutter a little wider than the holes of the tin, cut a round for each pie and line the holes with them.

9. ☐ Spoon mincemeat into the cases. With the smaller cutter, cut the same number of lids.

10. ☐ Seal each pie: a little of the beaten eggs round the rim of the case, the lid laid on top, and the two edges crimped together with the back of a fork.

11. ☐ Glaze the lids with the rest of the egg, pierce each once with the tip of a knife or a skewer so that steam can escape, and finish with the demerara sugar. Chill the filled tin for 30 minutes before it goes into the oven.

12. ☐ Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the pastry is golden brown and crisp.

13. ☐ Set the tin on a wire rack and let the pies cool before you turn them out.

14 ☐ Pot whatever mincemeat is left over in sterilised jars, and close them.

Notes

- This site also has a recipe for mincemeat on its own, after Isabella Beeton's "Excellent Mincemeat" of 1861: see Mincemeat, among the recipes.[2]

The apples

The recipe followed asks for one Bramley apple, peeled, cored and grated into the mincemeat.[1] Older mincemeats name other apples: Eliza Acton's "Superlative Mincemeat" of 1845 takes golden pippins, pared and cored, to the weight of its four lemons[3], and the mince pie meat in Fannie Farmer's Boston cookery book of 1896 calls for Baldwin apples, twice the amount of the chopped beef.[4]

Varieties the sources name:

Bramley's Seedling (United Kingdom) Golden Pippin (England) Baldwin (North America)

This recipe

It follows Mince pies. The source uses metric measures; the US amounts are this site's conversions. This site has no kitchen and has not cooked the recipe.

What was changed: The source gives the oven as 180 °C, 160 °C fan, gas mark 4; we give the conventional setting, and the site adds the others. It names the water for the pastry only in its method; we list it, with the source's amount. It asks for free-range eggs and egg yolks. It cuts twelve cases and twelve lids; we cut one of each for every pie, so that the steps hold when the recipe is scaled. It covers the mincemeat and wraps the pastry in cling film; we say only to cover and to wrap. Its tip on keeping the mincemeat for a month is left out. The American amounts are our conversions. The steps are in our own words.

How the recipes are chosen and converted

Sources

1. Mince pies (https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/mince_pies_16839), Thane Prince, BBC Food, 2013.
2. The Book of Household Management (https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/10136), Isabella Beeton; published by S. O. Beeton; Project Gutenberg, 1861.
3. Modern Cookery, in All Its Branches (fourth edition) (https://archive.org/details/b21531870), Eliza Acton; Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London; the University of Leeds Library copy at the Internet Archive, 1845.
4. The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book (https://archive.org/details/bostoncookingsc00collgoog), Fannie Merritt Farmer; Little, Brown, and Company, Boston; the Harvard University copy at the Internet Archive, 1896.
5. Meat to sweet: A history of the mince pie (https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/inspire-me/blog/blog-posts/recipe-for-real-mince-pies/), Sam Bilton, English Heritage, 18 December 2015.
6. How do Britons celebrate Christmas? (https://yougov.com/en-gb/articles/48208-how-do-britons-celebrate-christmas), Matthew Smith, YouGov, 19 December 2023.

From The World of Apples, apple.io/recipes/mince-pies/