

White Peach Pie

For the Crust

3 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
8 tablespoons cold lard
10 tablespoons cold unsalted butter
10-12 tablespoons ice water
1 egg
1 tablespoon water
1 tablespoon or more of sugar

For the Filling

8 ripe, white peaches
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 cup sugar
¼ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
3 tablespoons potato or cornstarch

For the Crust

In a food processor, process the flour and salt for 1 minute. Add the lard and process for about a minute. Cut the butter into small pieces and spread over the flour mixture. Pulse several times until butter is no larger than the size of lentils.

Transfer the mixture to a large bowl. Sprinkle the smaller amount of water over, the mixture, combining with a spatula. Try making a small portion of the dough come together in your hands. If it is still too dry, add the remaining 2 tablespoons of water. Form the dough into a ball.

Divide the dough into two parts, one a little larger than the other. Flatten the larger piece into a disk, wrap in plastic and refrigerate. Form the small piece into a flattened square, wrap, and refrigerate both for several hours, or preferably overnight.

Remove the large disk from the refrigerator, let it stand for 4-6 minutes to soften slightly. Roll the dough on a floured board until it is 2-3 inches larger than your 9-inch pie pan. Roll the dough around the rolling pin, then unroll onto the pie plate. Lift the edges and gently press the dough into the sides of the pan, leaving an overhang. Beat the egg with the tablespoon of water, and brush the dough with the egg wash.

Remove the square piece from the refrigerator and let it stand just till malleable. Roll the dough into a rectangle about 11 inches by 15 inches. Transfer the dough onto a parchment-lined sheet, and cut into 1-inch strips, making at least 8 strips. Freeze.

For the Filling

Bring a large pot of water to a boil, and fill a large bowl with ice water. Cut a small cross into the bottom of the peaches. Gently place the peaches in the boiling water for about a minute or so, until the skins begin to loosen. Remove the peaches and place in ice water. Gently remove the skin from each peach.

Cut the peaches in half, remove the pits, and cut each half into four or five slices. Place the slices in a colander set over a large bowl. Gently toss the slices with the lemon juice, the sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Sift the potato starch into the liquid that accumulated in

the pan, and whisk until well combined. In a small saucepan, gently cook the mixture, whisking constantly, until the starch is thoroughly dissolved and barely beginning to thicken. Cool the mixture. Place the peach slices in the bowl, and gently stir in the starch mixture. Fill the bottom crust with the peaches.

To make the lattice top, remove the strips from the freezer. As soon as you can lift them off the parchment, place four strips across the pie horizontally. The strips will still be hard. As soon as they are softened enough to be pliable, fold the first and third strips in half. Place another strip perpendicularly, up against the fold. Then unfold those strips over the perpendicular strip. Then fold back the second and fourth strips, and place another perpendicular strip. Continue with the remaining strips. If at any point, the strips become too soft to work with, place them back in the freezer for a few moments.

Trim excess ends off the strips, and fold the overhang from the bottom crust over the strips. Then crimp with the thumb and forefinger of one hand, and the thumb of the other to create a scalloped edge.

Put the pie in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes. Place a large tray on an oven rack that's just below the center level of the oven. Preheat the oven to 425°.

Remove the pie from the refrigerator and gently brush the lattice strip and the scalloped edge with the remaining egg wash. Then carefully sprinkle a tablespoon or so of sugar over the strips.

Place on the hot tray and bake about 30 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 375° and bake about another 30 minutes, until the crust is a golden brown. Remove from the oven and cool on a rack for at least three to four hours before serving.