

Fresh Pineapple Pie

For the Filling

1 ripe pineapple
1-2 cups sugar
1 cup water
4-5 teaspoons potato starch or cornstarch
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon butter

For the Crust

2³/₄ cups flour
1¹/₂ teaspoons salt
11 tablespoons unsalted butter
11 tablespoons lard or vegetable shortening
8-10 tablespoons ice water
1 small egg
1 tablespoon milk
1 tablespoon of egg white
Sugar for sprinkling

For the Crust

Cut the butter into tiny little pieces and freeze it until it's very hard. Freeze the lard or vegetable shortening until it's hard. Add the flour and salt to the bowl of a food processor. Process for 1 minute.

Chop the frozen lard or vegetable shortening into small pieces. Add it, as well as the frozen butter, to the flour in the food processor bowl. Pulse the mixture several times, just until the butter is about the size of peppercorns. You should be able to see tiny pieces of butter in the mixture. Gradually add ice water by the tablespoon. Add just enough water until the pastry begins to come together in the processor bowl. If you have a small food processor bowl, you may need to do this whole procedure in two batches—one a little larger than the other.

Remove the pastry from the food processor. Knead the pastry slightly. If you've made the pastry in a single batch, cut it into two pieces, one slightly larger. Form each into a round disk. Cover both disks in plastic wrap and refrigerate them overnight.

For the Filling

Peel and core the pineapple, then cut it into small chunks. Place the chunks in a medium-sized saucepan. Add 1 cup of sugar and 1 cup of water. Cook the pineapple over medium-low heat for about 10-15 minutes until it is quite tender. Taste the pineapple for sweetness. You may need to add as much as another cup of sugar, depending on how sweet your pineapple is. Place the cooked pineapple in the bowl of a food processor and pulse just until it reaches the consistency of crushed pineapple.

Drain the juice from the pineapple into a small saucepan. Depending on how much juice your pineapple yields, you will need to whisk in 4-5 teaspoons of potato starch or cornstarch. Cook the juice over medium-low heat, whisking constantly, just until the mixture begins to thicken. Stir the juice and lemon juice into the crushed pineapple.

For Assembling and Baking the Pie

Remove the larger disk of pastry from the refrigerator and let it sit on a floured board for about 7 minutes. Rolling out a cold pastry will make it crack. Roll out the pastry on a floured board until it is 1-1½ inches larger than your 9-inch pie plate. Lightly dust the pie plate with flour. Wrap the pastry around the rolling pin, and carefully unroll it onto the pie plate. Gently lift the edges of the pastry with one hand while pressing the pastry gently against the sides of the pie plate with your other hand. Freeze the pastry for 30 minutes.

Remove the smaller disk of pastry from the refrigerator, place it on the floured board for about 7 minutes. Roll out the pastry into a square that is an inch or so larger than your pie plate. With a straight edge, using a ravioli cutter or a sharp knife, cut the pastry into ¾-inch strips. Place a piece of parchment paper on a baking sheet that is slightly larger than your pie plate, invert the pie plate on it, and draw a circle around the edge of the plate.

To form a lattice top, place 5-6 strips of the pastry horizontally onto the parchment paper, spaced evenly apart. From left to right, fold the first, third, and fifth strips back. Place another strip vertically just against the fold of the horizontal strips. Unfold the first, third, and fifth strips over the vertical strip. Then fold the second and fourth strips back from left to right. Place another vertical strip to the left, leaving the same amount of space between vertical strips that you have between the horizontal strips. Continue this process with the remaining strips. Freeze the completed lattice crust until firm.

Place a large metal tray or baking sheet on the bottom rack of the oven, and preheat the oven to 425°.

Crack the egg and separate about 1 tablespoon of the white from the yolk. Beat together the egg yolk and its remaining white, with 1 tablespoon of milk. Remove the bottom pie crust from the freezer and paint the crust with the egg-yolk wash. Scrape all of the pineapple mixture into the bottom crust. Dot the top of the mixture with pieces of butter.

Remove the lattice top from the freezer, and gently loosen it from the parchment paper with a thin spatula, moving it just off the edge of the paper. Then take the paper off the baking sheet, and gently slide the lattice top over the pie. Trim off any excess ends from the lattice strips, and press them into the overhang from the bottom crust. With the second finger of your right hand on the inside and your thumb and second finger on the outside, crimp the edges to get a scalloped border.

Paint the strips and edges of the pie crust with the reserved egg white, and carefully sprinkle sugar over those strips and edges. Place the pie on the baking sheet or tray in the preheated oven, and bake it for about 25 minutes until it's beginning to brown. Lower the heat to 375°, and continue to bake until the crust is a deep golden brown. Remove the pie to a rack, and let it cool for about 2 hours before serving.