

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE PIES



Crust-less Delights for Every Occasion
By Hannah Kaminsky

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FOR BEGINNERS, AVID BAKERS, AND ENTHUSIASTIC EATERS

Everybody loves pie, but not everybody loves the crust. Home bakers in particular can find the pastry aspect frustrating and possibly a bit intimidating. So, why not skip all that fussy dough making, chilling, and rolling out, and get straight to the good part, the filling! The following pies are crust-less, but still perfectly sliceable. Hands-on time for each recipe is about 5 to 10 minutes, and with a flavor to suit everyone's tastes, there's no reason to avoid this sweet staple anymore!

Since these pies do not rely heavily on flour, they can all be made gluten free by simply substituting an equal amount of a gluten-free flour mix, and in the case of the Apple Streusel Pie, using certified gluten-free oats.

All of the recipes are dairy-free, egg-free, and vegan, but some can also be made soy-free by substituting your favorite soy-free milk alternative for the soymilk and using a soy-free margarine or shortening (such as Spectrum brand) in place of the margarine or shortening.

Each pie serves about 8 to 10 people, depending on appetites.

APPLE STREUSEL PIE

An American classic, but without the classic pain-in-the-rear crust to deal with! For a satisfying combination of tart and sweet, I like to use half green apples and half red apples for this pie, but any sort of firm, crisp apples you've got will work.



Streusel Topping:

6 Tablespoons Dark Brown Sugar, Packed
1/4 Cup Canola Oil
6 Tablespoons Rolled Oats
6 Tablespoons All Purpose Flour
1 Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon

Apple Filling:

1 Cup Unsweetened Applesauce
1/3 Cup Granulated Sugar
1/3 Cup Dark Brown Sugar, Packed
3/4 Cup All Purpose flour
1/4 Teaspoon Baking Powder
1/4 Teaspoon Salt
1/4 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract
1 Tablespoon Lemon Juice
4 Medium Apples

First things first, place all of the ingredients for the streusel into a small bowl, and mix them together thoroughly with a fork. After confirming that there are no remaining pockets of dry or unincorporated components, set aside.

Preheat your oven to 325 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 10-inch round pie pan.

For the filling, whisk together the applesauce, sugars, flour, baking powder, salt, vanilla, and lemon juice in a large bowl. Break up any clumps of flour or sugar that may form; you should end up with a fairly thick batter. Peel, core, slice, and then quarter the apples, dropping in the pieces as you go and mixing thoroughly to prevent them from browning. Once all of the apples are mixed into the batter and well-distributed, transfer it into your prepared pan, heaping the mixture slightly in the center. Use your hands to break up and sprinkle the streusel over the top.

You may wish to place a baking sheet below the pie pan, because it will bubble up and possibly over the sides. Bake for 45 - 50 minutes, until bubbling happily around the edges and lightly browned on top. Let cool for at least 1 1/2 hours before cutting if you want to get whole slices.

You could serve it immediately, scooping out spoonfuls like an apple crumble.

BANANA CRÈME PIE

Topped with fluffy, sweet crème, this intensely-flavored custard pie could make anyone go bananas!



Banana Custard:

- 5 - 6 Very Ripe, Medium-Sized Bananas
- 1 Tablespoon Lemon Juice
- 2/3 Cup Granulated Sugar
- 1/2 Cup Regular Coconut Milk
- 2 Tablespoons Coconut Oil, Melted
- 1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
- 3/4 Teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract

Cooked Crème Topping:

- 2 Tablespoons Cornstarch
- 1/2 Cup Plain Soymilk
- 1/2 Cup Vegetable Shortening
- 1/2 Cup Granulated Sugar
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and lightly grease a 9-inch pie pan.

Peel all of the bananas and place them in your food processor or blender, along with the lemon juice. Thoroughly puree; you should end up with about 2 cups of puree. Measure to ensure that you have the right amount, and then slide it back into the machine, along with the sugar, coconut milk, melted coconut oil, flour, baking powder, and vanilla.

Pulse until the mixture is smooth and homogeneous. Pour the mixture into your prepared pan, and smooth down the top with your spatula. Bake for 30 - 35 minutes, until puffy, set on top, and very lightly browned on the outer edges. It will deflate a bit as it cools. Chill thoroughly before decorating with the crème.

For the crème topping, vigorously whisk together the cornstarch and soymilk in a medium saucepan, making certain to beat out all of the lumps. Set it over medium heat,

whisking continuously, and cook for 2 - 5 minutes until thickened to the consistency of pudding. Let cool to room temperature.

Cream the shortening and sugar together in your stand mixer, and add in the vanilla. Scrape down the sides of the bowl before introducing the cooked soymilk mixture. Start the mixer on a low speed at first, and once everything is more or less incorporated, crank it up to high. Let it whip for about 5 minutes until light and fluffy. Apply as desired to your pie.

CHOCOLATE FUDGE PIE

Imagine a cross between a rich, fudgy brownie and silky chocolate custard, and you would come close to this decadent pie. Little can compare to this chocoholic's delight.



Chocolate Pie:

1 Cup Plain Soymilk
5 Ounces Semi Sweet Chocolate, Finely Chopped
1/4 Cup Margarine, Cubed
1/2 Cup Vegan "Cream Cheese"
3/4 Cup Granulated Sugar
1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
1/2 Teaspoon Salt
1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 9-inch round pie pan.

Place the soymilk, chocolate, and margarine into a microwave safe dish, and heat for 1 - 2 minutes. Stir after each minute, being careful not to overdo the cooking time and burn the chocolate. Once the chocolate is melted, stir vigorously until completely smooth.

In a mixing bowl, thoroughly cream the "cream cheese" and sugar, so that no lumps remain and the mixture is homogeneous. Add in the flour, baking powder, and salt, and beat to incorporate. Pour in the chocolate mixture, along with the vanilla, and mix well to achieve a smooth batter. Be sure to scrape down the sides of your bowl so that you don't miss any hidden pockets of unmixed ingredients.

Pour your batter into the prepared pie pan, and tap it on the counter a few times to dislodge any air bubbles. Smooth down the top with a spatula and bake for 25-30 minutes, until the top appears to be set, and the whole thing has puffed up a bit. A toothpick will come out of the center coated with gooey chocolate, as this pie should remain very moist and fudgy. The pie will deflate a bit as it cools. Let rest for at least 1 hour before serving. This pie is great warm and slightly gooey, with a scoop of vegan vanilla ice cream melting over the top, or chilled, or even frozen!

COCONUT PIE

Deceptively simple, this has got to be one of my favorite quick desserts for serving a crowd. Even if some people claim to not like coconut, you'll change their mind with just one slice!



Coconut Pie:

- 1 12-Ounce Package Extra-Firm Silken Tofu
- 1 Cup Granulated Sugar
- 2 Cups Sweetened Flaked Coconut
- 1 Cup Coconut Milk
- 1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
- 1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1/2 Teaspoon Salt
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and lightly grease and flour a 9-inch round pie pan.

Drain any excess water from your tofu before placing it in your food processor or blender. Puree until the tofu is completely smooth, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add in the sugar, coconut, coconut milk, flour, baking powder, salt, and vanilla, and pulse very briefly to combine. Be careful not to overdo it, because you don't want to chop up the coconut too much.

Pour the resulting mixture into your prepared pie pan, and bake for 40 - 45 minutes, until lightly browned around the edges but still wobbly in the center when tapped. Set aside to cool, then refrigerate for 1 hour, or until thoroughly chilled.

COOKIES AND CRÈME PIE

Forget the non-dairy topping, pudding mixes, and gelatin; this baked crème pie is not only healthier than the original, but tastier by far.



Cookies & Crème Pie:

- 1 12-Ounce Package Extra-Firm Silken Tofu
- 1 8-Ounce Package Vegan "Cream Cheese"
- 2/3 Cup Granulated Sugar
- 2 Teaspoons Vanilla Extract
- 1/2 Cup Plain Soymilk
- 1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
- 1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
- Pinch Salt
- 14 Chocolate Sandwich Cookies, Quartered

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 9-inch pie pan.

Drain away the excess liquid from your tofu, and toss it into your food processor or blender. Puree thoroughly, scraping down the sides of the bowl periodically to ensure that no lumps remain. Add in the "cream cheese," sugar, vanilla, soymilk, flour, baking powder, and salt, and let the machine run until the mixture is smooth again. Fold in the cookie pieces by hand, ensuring that they're evenly distributed throughout the batter.

Pour the whole thing into your prepared pan, and let it bake for 25 - 30 minutes. It will bake much like a cheesecake, and the edges may crack a bit as it nears completion. The edges should be set while the center still seems a bit wobbly. Let cool to room temperature, and then chill thoroughly before serving.

If you wish to decorate your pie with whipped topping, see the Banana Crème Pie for a recipe. Garnish with additional sandwich cookies if desired.

CRAN-CHERRY PIE

A little bit tart, a little bit sweet, every bite of this pie is slightly different, but always delicious.



Cran-Cherry Pie:

- 1 1/2 Cups Cranberries, Fresh or Frozen*
- 1 1/2 Cups Dark Sweet Cherries, Fresh** or Frozen*
- 1/2 Cup Slivered Almonds
- 3/4 Cup Plain Soymilk
- 1 Teaspoon Almond Extract
- 3 Tablespoons Margarine, Melted
- 1/4 Cup Cornstarch
- 1 Cup Granulated Sugar
- 1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
- 1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1/4 Teaspoon Salt

*If using frozen, thaw and drain first

**Be sure to pit your cherries!

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 9-inch pie pan. Toss the cranberries, cherries, and slivered almonds together, and evenly distribute the mixture in your prepared pie pan. Set aside.

In a large bowl, whisk together the soymilk, almond extract, melted margarine, cornstarch, sugar, flour, baking powder, and salt until smooth. Pour the batter over the fruits and nuts in the pie pan. Don't worry if it looks like a mess at first, the cranberries will eventually float to the top.

Bake for 50 - 60 minutes until a toothpick inserted into the center (of the batter only, not touching the fruits) comes out clean. Let cool for at least 1 hour before serving.

LEMON CURD PIE

Do you crave the zesty citrus zip and creamy consistency of that perennial bake sale star, the lemon bar? Look no further; this is a dessert that will satisfy, without any of the eggs!



Lemon Curd Pie:

1 1/3 Cups Instant Mashed Potato Flakes
3/4 Cup Lemon Juice
Zest of 3 Lemons
2 Tablespoons Margarine
1 1/3 Cups Plain Soymilk
1 Cup Granulated Sugar
1/3 Cup All Purpose Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
Pinch Salt
1/2 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract

Preheat your oven to 325 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 9-inch round pie pan.

Combine the mashed potato flakes, lemon juice, and zest in a microwave-safe bowl and heat for 1 - 2 minutes, until the liquid has been absorbed. Move the contents of the bowl into your food processor or blender, and thoroughly puree until the mixture is entirely smooth. Cut the margarine into small chunks before dropping it in, and puree so that no lumps remain; it should melt from the residual heat. Drizzle in the soymilk slowly while running the motor, giving it time to incorporate. Add the sugar, flour, baking powder, salt, and vanilla, and pulse to combine.

Pour the mixture into your prepared pan, and bake for 30 - 40 minutes. It may look a bit wobbly in the center even when it's done, but the edges will seem slightly firm and just barely browned.

Cool to room temperature before letting it rest in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours, or until thoroughly chilled.

MINT CHOCOLATE CHIP PIE

What could be more refreshing than a frozen mint dessert? How about a frozen mint dessert with a generous handful of chocolate thrown in? This pie is perfect for hot summer days, but tasty enough that you'll want to throw on a sweater and eat it in the winter, too!



Mint-Chip Pie:

2 Large, Ripe Avocados
1 1/2 Teaspoons Lemon Juice
1 12-Ounce Package Extra-Firm Silken Tofu
1 1/4 Cups Granulated Sugar
1/2 Cup Plain Soymilk
1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
2 Teaspoons Peppermint Extract
1 1/2 Teaspoons Vanilla Extract
3/4 Cup Mini Chocolate Chips or Finely Chopped Chocolate Chunks

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 10-inch pie pan.

Slice your avocados in half and discard the pits. Scoop out the flesh and toss the pieces into your food processor or blender, along with the lemon juice to prevent browning. This should equal about 2 cups of puree. Thoroughly puree, scraping down the sides to ensure that you don't miss any chunks of avocado. Drain away and discard any excess liquid from the tofu, and add it to your machine. Puree until completely smooth.

Add in the sugar, soymilk, flour, baking powder, and both extracts, and pulse to combine. Once you achieve a homogeneous mixture, fold in the chocolate chips or chunks by hand, and then pour everything into your prepared pan. Tap the pan on the counter a few times to release any air bubbles, and smooth out the top with a spatula. Bake for 40 - 45 minutes, until browned around the edges and the center no longer looks shiny. Let cool completely before moving the pie into your freezer, where it should rest for at least 4 hours, or until frozen solid.

If the pie has been sitting in the freezer for longer (which it definitely can, it's a wonderful dessert to make ahead of time), be sure to let the slices thaw for about 15 minutes on the counter, or 15 seconds in the microwave before enjoying.

PEANUT BUTTER PIE

Here's one for all those peanut butter lovers out there! However, if you're not wild about peanuts but adore almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, or other nuts, just substitute that corresponding nut butter instead.



Peanut Butter Pie:

1 Cup Plain Soymilk
1 Teaspoon Apple Cider Vinegar
1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract
1 Cup Dark Brown Sugar, Packed
1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
1/2 Teaspoon Salt
1 Cup Crunchy Peanut Butter

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 9-inch round pie pan.

Whisk together the soymilk, vinegar, and vanilla in a small bowl, and set aside. Separately, combine the sugar, flour, baking powder, salt, and peanut butter. Beat together thoroughly so that no lumps remain and all of the dry ingredients are completely incorporated. Add in the soymilk mixture, and stir until smooth. Pour the resulting batter into your prepared pie pan, and bake for 28 - 32 minutes. It should be lightly browned around the edges and no longer shiny on top. Let cool to room temperature before slicing, and serve with chocolate sauce if desired.

For an easy, instant chocolate sauce, simply place 1 cup of soymilk and 1 cup (6 ounces) of chocolate chips in a microwave safe dish, and heat for 1 - 2 minutes. Stir vigorously to melt any remaining lumps of chocolate, and let cool for a few minutes before using. It will continue to thicken as it cools, and if you leave it in the fridge overnight, this mixture will solidify. Just heat it briefly to bring it back to a pourable consistency.

PECAN PIE

Thanksgiving just wouldn't be the same without this traditional dessert. It might be better, though, if it weren't always so tooth-achingly sweet and unbearably rich. It's time to toss out that original dish, move on to this new and improved pecan pie!



Pecan Pie:

- 1 12-Ounce Package Extra-Firm Silken Tofu
- 1/2 Cup Brown Rice Syrup*
- 1 Cup Dark Brown Sugar, Packed
- 2 Tablespoons Bourbon
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract
- 1/4 Cup Margarine, Melted
- 1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
- 1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1/4 Teaspoon Salt
- 2 Cups Toasted, Chopped Pecans, Divided

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 9-inch round pie pan.

Drain away as much excess liquid from your block of tofu as possible, and then toss it into your food processor or blender. Puree the tofu until completely smooth, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add in the brown rice syrup, sugar, bourbon, vanilla, and melted margarine, letting the machine run for a minute or two to thoroughly incorporate everything. Whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt before adding that to the machine as well, and pulse briefly to combine. Fold in one cup of the pecans by hand, and pour the batter into your prepared pan. Sprinkle the remaining pecans over the top of the pie, and gently press them in.

Bake for 45 - 55 minutes, until the edges look firm and a toothpick comes out of the center clean. Let cool for at least 1 hour before slicing.

*Maple syrup or agave nectar can also be substituted, but will give the pie a slightly different flavor.

PUMPKIN PIE

The scent alone of this spiced autumnal pie baking in the oven is enough reason to celebrate the season!



Pumpkin Pie:

- 1 15-Ounce Can Pumpkin Puree
- 1 Cup Vegan "Sour Cream"*
- 1/4 Cup Plain Soymilk
- 2 Teaspoons Vanilla Extract
- 1/2 Cup Dark Brown Sugar, Packed
- 1/4 Cup Granulated Sugar
- 2 Tablespoons Flax Seeds, Ground
- 1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
- 1 Teaspoon Cornstarch
- 3/4 Teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1/4 Teaspoon Salt
- 1 1/2 Teaspoons Ground Cinnamon
- 3/4 Teaspoon Ground Ginger
- 1/4 Teaspoon Ground Allspice
- Pinch Ground Nutmeg

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 9-inch pie pan.

In a large bowl, whisk together the pumpkin puree, "sour cream," soymilk, and vanilla. Add in both sugars and the ground flax seeds, and stir until everything is completely incorporated and no lumps remain. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, cornstarch, baking powder, salt, and spices, stirring until all of the dry ingredients are evenly distributed. Pour the dry mixture into the wet, and whisk until smooth. Pour the batter into your prepared pan, smooth down the top with a spatula, and bake for 35 - 45 minutes, until no longer shiny on top and the edges just begin to crack. Let cool for at least 1 1/2 hours before slicing; serve either warm or chilled.

*A block of silken tofu can be substituted for the "sour cream" in this recipe, but the texture won't be quite as silky smooth.

SWEET POTATO PIE

Many people seem to believe that sweet potatoes were never meant to be made into dessert. Even I might agree most of the time, judging by the standard marshmallow-laced casseroles, but this pie proves that they deserve a spot on your table after dinner, and especially in *this* dish!



Sweet Potato Filling:

1 Cup Granulated Sugar
2 1/2 Cups Sweet Potato Puree*
1/2 Cup Plain Soymilk
1/2 Cup All Purpose Flour
1/2 Teaspoon Baking Soda
1/4 Teaspoon Salt
1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract
1/2 Inch Fresh Ginger Root, Grated

Cream Cheese Swirl:

1/4 Cup Vegan "Cream Cheese"
1 Tablespoon Maple Syrup

*To make sweet potato puree, simply chop 2 or 3 large sweet potatoes into medium sized pieces and boil for approximately 15 – 25 minutes, until fork tender. Let cool, remove the peel, and puree in your food processor or blender.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and lightly grease and flour a 9-inch pie pan.

In a large bowl, simply whisk together all of the ingredients for the filling until smooth and homogeneous. Pour into your prepared pie pan and set aside.

To make the cream cheese swirl, whisk together both ingredients. Drizzle the mixture over the top of the filling, and use a knife or spatula to marble it into the pie. Tap the whole pan against counter to release any air bubbles and smooth down the top a bit.

Bake for 50 - 60 minutes, until puffed up and small cracks have begun to appear around the edges. Let cool completely before slicing.

THANK YOU AND HAPPY BAKING!

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