

Shaker Lemon Pie

SERVES 8

Have an extra lemon on hand in case the three sliced lemons do not yield enough juice. See page 518 for more information on rolling and fitting pie dough.

- 1 recipe Double-Crust Pie Dough (page 518)
- 3 large lemons, sliced thin and seeded
- 1 3/4 cups (12 1/4 ounces) sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon heavy cream

1. Roll 1 disk of dough into 12-inch circle on lightly floured counter, then fit it into 9-inch pie plate, letting excess dough hang over edge; cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Roll other disk of dough into 12-inch circle on lightly floured counter, then transfer to parchment paper-lined baking sheet; cover with plastic and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

2. Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 425 degrees. Squeeze lemon slices in fine-mesh strainer set over bowl; reserve juice (you should have 6 tablespoons). Bring drained slices and 2 cups water to boil in saucepan, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until slices are softened, about 5 minutes. Drain well and discard liquid. Combine softened lemon slices, sugar, salt, and 1/4 cup reserved lemon juice in bowl; stir until sugar dissolves.

3. Whisk cornstarch and remaining 2 tablespoons lemon juice in large bowl. Whisk eggs into cornstarch mixture, then slowly stir in lemon slice mixture until combined. Pour into chilled pie shell. Brush edges of dough with 1 teaspoon cream. Loosely roll second piece of dough around rolling pin then gently unroll it over pie. Trim, fold, and crimp edges, and cut 4 vent holes in top. Brush top with remaining 2 teaspoons cream.

4. Bake until light golden, about 20 minutes, then decrease oven temperature to 375 degrees and continue to bake until golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Let pie cool on wire rack for at least 1 hour. Serve. (Pie can be refrigerated for 2 days.)

BUILDING BOLD, NOT BITTER, LEMON FLAVOR

Using sliced whole lemons, pith and all, can produce an overwhelmingly bitter filling. We found a few tricks to create bright lemon flavor while tempering the bitterness of the pith.



1. Squeeze seeded lemon slices and reserve juice for filling.



2. Simmer slices to mellow bitterness of pith and then add them to filling with uncooked juice.

THE SLICE IS RIGHT

While developing our recipe for Shaker Lemon Pie, we found that using a knife to evenly cut the lemons into paper-thin slices was a difficult and time-consuming task. We had better results with a mandoline (or V-slicer), which produced perfectly thin slices in no time at all. If you don't have a mandoline, we did find another piece of kitchen equipment that will make the process easier—the freezer. Popping the lemons into the freezer for about 30 minutes firms them up for better hand slicing, which is best accomplished with a serrated knife.

SHAKER COOKING

The Shakers' food was never ornate and was always healthy and hearty enough to support their industrious, hard-working lifestyle. Shakers scrubbed—rather than peeled—their vegetables (and, in the case of Shaker Lemon Pie, their citrus fruit) to minimize waste. They were also pioneers in using exact measurements in cooking at a time when many recipes called for a "dash," "glob," or "handful" of something.