

11/16/09 - Pumpkin Pie, Dairy Free

Maple, brown sugar, caramel, ginger, molasses, pumpkin, and cinnamon are some of everyone's favorite Thanksgiving flavors. Sweet and savory with a tiny amount of heat, they make for wonderful desserts and side dishes. I look forward to the fourth Thursday in November every year. I recall the traditional dishes and try to introduce something new as well. My sister in law actually makes the Thanksgiving feast and I bring dessert, always trying to top what I made last year. Even so, I always include pumpkin pie in the assortment. Just to get my fill, I cook another Thanksgiving feast on the Friday after the big day for Shabbat so we can have another taste and our own leftovers at our house.

Pumpkin pie is always a challenge since the traditional one made with evaporated milk, therefore dairy, cannot be served in a kosher home after turkey. In addition, I am lactose intolerant or dairy allergic so I have come up with an alternative recipe. Over the years, I have tried it with Mocha Mix, Soy Milk, Rice Dream, and other substitutes. I think the unsweetened, organic soy milk produces the best texture for a dairy-free filling. For testing this recipe, I used Whole Foods brand.

Pie crust scares a lot of people, so they settle for salty store bought crust or just buy the whole pie. My sister Carole's pie crust is very easy and yields enough for two generous pie crusts or one double crust pie (like an apple pie). You can assemble pie crust dough ahead of time and freeze the discs in plastic until the day you need it.

Serves 8 to 12

Pie Crust:

3 cups unbleached flour

2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon sugar

1 cup vegetable shortening (Crisco no Trans fat comes in premeasured cubes) or 1 cup coconut oil (solid at room temperature)

1 egg

1 tablespoon white vinegar (like Heinz)

6 tablespoons ice water

Filling:

2 extra large eggs

15 ounces canned pure pumpkin (like Libby)

1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar

1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon packed light brown sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

12 ounces organic unsweetened soy milk

To assemble pie crust, place flour, salt, and sugar in a medium bowl. Stir together. Add shortening and with your hands or a pastry cutter, cut in shortening until the dough looks clumpy, about the size of peas with some whole bits of shortening still visible. Whisk liquids together in a measuring pitcher and then, add to flour mix. Stir for a moment with a fork. Press dough together using your hands. Form a large ball with out kneading and minimal mixing. Divide dough into two pieces and flatten to form 2 discs.







Take a handful of extra flour and dust work surface. Work surface should be stone or wood. If you have a large silpat for dough rolling that is the best! Dust rolling pin

with a bit of flour. Place dough in front of you, with the side of your hands; make parallel indentations going one direction and then the opposite direction. You will have a cross hatch. Using a rolling pin, start rolling out the dough up and down taking care not roll off the edge. Next, lift dough, scatter some more flour under it, and give it a 90 degree turn. Roll out this direction. Lift dough again to make sure it is not stuck to the surface. Continue rolling from center to outer edges of dough to form a circle around 13 inches in diameter and very thin. This recipe is very generous, you will have dough left over, but it is great for beginners.

Fold circle in half and then again in quarters. Take center point and place it at center of pie plate (I like a 9 inch glass deep dish). Unfold pie crust until it fills the plate and overhangs the edge a bit. Don't worry if it tears, just patch it. Gently press dough into corners. There should be an ample overhang of dough to roll under into a neat ridge. Trim any excess. Using your thumb and index finger of one hand to hold rolled edge, use index finger on your other hand to press through where you are holding the edge and make a crimp. Repeat the motion around pie and you will have a scalloped edge. With left over scraps of dough, you can roll out and cut leaves to decorate edge.





Next, set empty crust aside and prepare filling. Preheat the oven to 400°F. I recently noticed that the small can of pumpkin says 16 ounces, while the large can that is for 2 pies is only 29 ounces. That sounds like screwy math to me, but who knows. I think I will buy the small individual cans for two pies.

Put pumpkin, eggs, spices, and sugars in a medium bowl. Whisk until well blended then, add soy milk and carefully whisk until combined. Pour filling into prepared crust and place it in oven. Leave it at 400° F for 15 minutes and then, turn oven down to 350° F for around another 40- 45 minutes. The pie is done when the crust is deep golden brown and custard is no longer loose. Let it cool off and serve with parve (dairy-free) ice cream or whipped topping.

Enjoy your holiday.

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