



Rustic apple pie

Serves 8 10 Vegan

375 g (2½ cups) plain (all-purpose) flour, plus extra if needed and for dusting

2 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar, plus extra for sprinkling

1 tsp salt

100 g (about ½ cup) refrigerated coconut oil

170 ml (¾ cup) ice-cold water, plus extra if needed

2 tbsp milk of your choice

ice cream or cream of your choice, to serve (optional)

Apple pie filling

2 tbsp cornflour (corn starch)

115 g (½ cup) brown sugar

1 tbsp lemon juice

2 tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp ground ginger

2 tsp vanilla essence

6 large apples, peeled, cored and sliced into thin wedges (about 2 mm/⅛ in thick)

Swaps

Apples pears, stone fruit, rhubarb or berries

Coconut oil butter

This is the first time I've made vegan pastry that genuinely competes with all-butter pastry. In fact, I am willing to say you might not even pick it as vegan. Coconut oil, with a few key tricks, disperses through the flour in a very similar way to butter, and when kept cold by using iced water and working quickly, it creates an amazingly crispy and flaky crumb. The filling is super simple, but perfectly tart and flavoursome. You could get creative and add stewed rhubarb or other fruits, such as pears, berries or stone fruit, or mix up the spices.

Combine the flour, sugar and salt in a mixing bowl. Chop the cold coconut oil into small pieces, then add it to the flour mixture. Use a fork, scissors or a sharp knife to cut through the mixture repeatedly, slicing the oil into tinier pieces and dispersing it through the flour in the process. After a minute or two you'll have a breadcrumb-like consistency, with most of the oil broken up. If you need to, you can also use your fingertips to rub the coconut oil through the flour, but you'll need to work quickly so the heat from your fingers doesn't melt the oil. Pour in the ice-cold water, then use a fork or spoon to mix the water through the flour mixture to form a sticky, shaggy dough. Use your hands to bring the dough together into a ball, adding a little extra flour or water if needed. Wrap the dough or place in a bowl covered with a plate and set aside in the fridge to rest for at least 10 minutes (up to overnight) to firm up.

Preheat the oven to 180 °C (350 °F) fan-forced and grease or line a pie tin or baking tray with baking paper.

To make the apple pie filling, combine the ingredients, except the apple, in a bowl. Add the apple and toss well to coat, then set aside.

Remove the pastry from the fridge and divide it into two pieces, one slightly bigger than the other. On a lightly floured work surface, roll each piece of dough into a rough circular disc, about 3–4 mm (⅜ in) thick and 20–25 cm (8–10 in) wide. Transfer the larger disc to the prepared pie tin or baking tray (rolling it carefully onto the rolling pin, then unrolling it over the tin or tray is the easiest way to do this without breakages; if the pastry does tear as you roll it out or try to move it, just patch it back up).

Scoop the apple filling onto the pastry (leave a 1 cm/½ in border if baking the pie on a baking tray). Drizzle any juices that have collected in the bowl over the top of the apple, then gently place the remaining disc of pastry over the top.

To seal the pie, you can either scallop the edges by folding them over and onto themselves or use a fork to press down and create a crimped edge. Brush the milk over the pastry and sprinkle with 2 teaspoons of sugar. Use a sharp knife to cut a small hole in the middle of the pastry, to allow steam to escape as the pie cooks.

Transfer the pie to the oven and bake for 30–40 minutes, until golden brown. Serve warm with ice cream or cream, if you like. The leftovers will keep well in an airtight container in the fridge for a couple of days. *



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