

cherry pie

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Cherry Pie

Sour cherries, sugar, a starch, and a lattice. The cherry that makes a pie is the Montmorency or another sour variety — sweet cherries have too little acid and too much water, and they bake into something flat. Michigan grows most of the American crop, and the sour cherry season is about three weeks long, which is why nearly all cherry pie is made from frozen or jarred fruit.

What makes it work

- **Sour cherries, not sweet.** If sweet cherries are all there is, cut the sugar by a third and add the juice of a whole [lemon](#) plus 2 tsp of [almond extract](#) — the almond note is what people associate with cherry pie, and it comes from the stones. See [Cherry](#).
- **Cherries are wet, so use tapioca.** Tapioca starch handles high acid and freezing better than cornstarch and sets clear. 40 g for 1 kg of fruit.
- **Do not thaw frozen cherries.** Toss them frozen with the sugar and starch and add 15 minutes to the bake. Thawed fruit floods the shell.
- **A lattice is functional here.** It lets a very wet filling reduce.
- **It must bubble in the centre,** not just at the edge, before it comes out.

Ingredients

One 23 cm pie. Serves 8.

- 1 batch [all-butter pie crust](#)
- 1 kg sour cherries, pitted — fresh, frozen or drained from jars
- 200 g granulated sugar
- 40 g tapioca starch, or 35 g [cornstarch](#)
- 3 g fine salt
- 1 tbsp [lemon juice](#)
- ½ tsp [almond extract](#)
- 20 g unsalted butter, in pieces
- 1 [egg](#) beaten with 1 tbsp [milk](#), to glaze
- coarse sugar

Method

Line the tin with the bottom crust and chill. Roll the second disc and cut it into 2 cm strips; chill those flat on a tray.

Toss the cherries with the sugar, starch, salt, lemon juice and almond extract. If using fresh fruit, leave 30 minutes and include the juices.

Heat the oven to **220 °C / 425 °F** with a heavy tray on the bottom rack.

Fill the shell, dot with butter, and weave the lattice over the top. Trim, seal and crimp. Chill 20 minutes, then glaze and sugar.

Bake **20 minutes** at 220 °C, then **190 °C / 375 °F for 40–50 minutes**, until the filling bubbles slowly and thickly in the middle. Tent the edge if needed.

Cool at least four hours.

Notes

- **A cherry pitter is worth owning** for a single season; a chopstick pushed through the stem end works and is slow.
- Jarred Morello cherries in syrup are the reliable off-season option; drain them, reduce 200 ml of the

syrup to 60 ml, and add it back.

- **Keeps three days** at room temperature.

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