

concord grape pie

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Concord Grape Pie

A regional American pie from the grape belt of western New York and northern Ohio, made for about three weeks in September when Concord grapes come in. It is the most laborious fruit pie in this folder — every grape is squeezed out of its skin by hand — and the reason for the work is worth knowing.

What makes it work

- **The skin and the pulp are cooked separately, then recombined.** Concord is a slip-skin grape:

squeeze it and the pulp pops out, leaving the skin behind. The pulp is simmered and sieved to remove the seeds; the skins are kept, because they carry nearly all the colour and the distinctive musky flavour. Discard the skins and the pie is pale and bland.

- **The seeds must come out.** They are bitter and hard. Simmering the pulp five minutes softens it enough to push through a sieve.
- **Lemon juice.** Concord is low in acid and the pie tastes flat without it.
- **A little butter and flour or tapioca.** The filling is juicy; 40 g of starch per kilo.
- **A crumb top or a lattice,** because the filling needs to reduce.

Ingredients

One 23 cm pie. Serves 8.

- 1 batch [all-butter pie crust](#), or one shell plus a crumb topping
- 1.2 kg Concord [grapes](#)
- 200 g granulated sugar
- 40 g [cornstarch](#) or tapioca starch
- 3 g fine salt
- 2 tbsp [lemon juice](#)
- 20 g unsalted butter
- 1 [egg](#) beaten with 1 tbsp [milk](#)

Method

Squeeze each grape so the pulp pops out into one bowl and the skin drops into another. This takes twenty minutes and there is no way round it.

Simmer the pulp five minutes until the seeds loosen, then push it through a sieve, discarding the seeds. You should have about 500 ml of seedless pulp.

Combine the sieved pulp with the reserved skins, the sugar, cornstarch, salt and lemon juice. The skins soften as the pie bakes.

Line the tin and chill. Heat the oven to **220 °C / 425 °F** with a heavy tray inside.

Fill, dot with butter, and top with a lattice or a crumb. Glaze if using pastry.

Bake **20 minutes** at 220 °C, then **190 °C / 375 °F for 35–40 minutes**, until the filling bubbles.

Cool four hours.

Notes

- **The filling freezes** and is worth making in quantity in September; the skins and pulp keep a year frozen together.
- Concord is a *Vitis labrusca* grape, not a wine grape, and its flavour is the one Western palates associate with grape juice and jelly — because the juice and the jelly are made from it. See [Grapes](#).
- **Keeps three days** at room temperature.

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