

tomato pie

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Tomato Pie

A blind-baked shell, sliced ripe tomatoes, herbs, and a cheese-and-mayonnaise topping browned in the oven. It is Southern American, it appears at church suppers and on porches in August, and it exists for exactly one reason: a glut of tomatoes that will not keep.

It is also the hardest filling in this folder to keep dry.

What makes it work

- **Salt the tomatoes and drain them for an hour.** Slice 1 cm thick, lay on a rack over a tray, salt both sides, and leave. They will give up an astonishing amount of liquid. Then blot each slice dry. Skip this and the pie is soup.
- **A moisture barrier in the shell.** A layer of grated cheese, or breadcrumbs, or a thin smear of mustard on the blind-baked base.
- **Mayonnaise is the binder, not a condiment.** Mixed with grated cheese it makes a topping that browns and sets, and it is what holds the slices together. Full-fat only.
- **Bake uncovered and long enough to brown.** 45 minutes at 175 °C.
- **Let it cool 30 minutes.** Hot, it slides apart.

Ingredients

One 23 cm pie. Serves 8.

- 1 blind-baked shell — [all-butter pie crust](#)
- 1 kg ripe [tomatoes](#), sliced 1 cm
- 10 g fine salt, for drawing water
- 1 onion, finely sliced and softened in oil, or 4 spring onions
- 20 g basil leaves, torn
- 1 tbsp thyme leaves
- 200 g sharp cheddar, grated — see [cheese](#)
- 100 g Gruyère or mozzarella, grated
- 150 g full-fat mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp dijon mustard
- black pepper

Method

Slice, salt and drain the tomatoes on a rack for **one hour**. Blot every slice dry with kitchen paper.

Blind bake the shell. Set the oven to **175 °C / 350 °F**.

Spread the mustard thinly over the base and scatter 50 g of the cheddar into the shell as a barrier.

Layer the tomatoes, onion, basil and thyme, seasoning with pepper as you go.

Mix the remaining cheeses with the mayonnaise and spread it over the top, sealing to the pastry edge.

Bake **40–50 minutes**, until browned and bubbling.

Cool at least 30 minutes before cutting. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Notes

- **Only worth making in tomato season.** A February tomato has no flavour to concentrate; see [tomato recipes](#).
- A layer of corn kernels, or cooked bacon, is a common addition; see [corn](#).
- **Keeps two days refrigerated** and is good cold, though the pastry softens.

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