



Nutrition News

All About Pie

Most cultures have some version of a pie, whether sweet or savory. In ancient times, pie crusts or shells were sometimes just a vessel to keep the filling from running and were not meant to be eaten. It's hard to know for sure who baked the first pie - dough and round baking dishes aren't exactly the most enduring archeological artifacts - but there's some consensus that two early pie-making civilizations included the ancient Egyptians and Greeks. Both had the technology, and they had the grains. As far back as 6000 BCE, a traveler to the Nile delta might have been offered a pie with a crust made of ground oat, barley, and rye, filled with honey, and baked over hot coals. The expression "as American as apple pie" shouldn't fool you into thinking Americans invented it, any more than French fries or hamburgers are a product of Parisian and German culinary innovation, respectively.

Why Eat Pies?

Pies are great ways to use up ingredients that might not be all that exciting on their own. That container of leftover lentils in the fridge, those veggies in the crisper drawer that have seen better days, and even fruit that's fast approaching the twilight of its life can be stretched into a full meal or a nutrient-packed dessert through the magic of pie.

In the US, we associate pies with holidays - pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving, apple pie for July 4th, and lemon meringue pie on — we are not making this up — National Lemon Meringue Pie Day (August 15).

Savory Pies

Pot pies traditionally feature meat and vegetables in a deep dish, covered with a domed crust. Many pot pie recipes omit the bottom crust, so the dish is really a baked stew with an edible lid. The two most common varieties are chicken and beef pot pies, which provide a jumping-off point for creating healthy, plant-based alternatives.

Shepherd's pies have historically consisted of a lower layer of ground meat covered with a mashed potato crust. As the name implies, the most common meat was lamb or mutton. Similar pies made with beef were called "cottage pies."

Hand pies are small, individual servings, typically with the filling completely enclosed within a crust. This category includes empanadas, samosas, Cornish pasties, Jamaican patties, Italian calzones, and Russian/Ukrainian pirozhki. They can be eaten hot or cold, which makes them good portable choices.

Sweet Pies

Strawberry-rhubarb is a fine combination of sweet and tart; blueberry pies are incredible, and cherry and peach are no slouches either. Other kinds of sweet pies include galettes, tarts, mousse pies, custard pies, meringue pies, and there are also sweet veggie pies that use pumpkin, sweet potato, or other flavorful vegetable-based fillings.

How to Make Pies Plant-Based and Healthier

You can replace some or all of the refined sugar in a pie recipe with date paste, maple syrup, coconut sugar, honey, stevia, molasses, or monkfruit. The best sweetener of all is fresh fruit. Many people find that they can satisfy a sweet craving with

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frozen grapes or berries, a mandarin, a mango, or a banana.

Alternatives To Basic Flour And Eggs

Pie crusts typically require flour - but you can choose healthier flours than the default white-bleached variety, such as 100% whole wheat flour, chickpea flour, almond flour, buckwheat flour, oat flour, or rice flour. There are also several varieties of gluten-free flour mixes available in many supermarkets and health food stores these days.

There are several ways to replace eggs in a pie recipe, depending on the function of the eggs. Flax meal and water (also known as “flax eggs”) can bind ingredients together in a pastry or quiche. The water left over from canned or cooked chickpeas, called aquafaba, makes an excellent meringue base. And soft or silken tofu can often replace eggs in quiches and frittatas.

You Don't Know Beans - Or Do You?

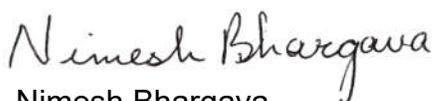
It's just as easy to dive into the savory world of meat pies by substituting beans and other legumes, mushrooms, and veggies like eggplant that can approximate the mouthfeel of meat. And if you're cooking for those who aren't really into veggies yet, you can help them transition with plant-based meat analogs, which are becoming more realistic and less expensive by the day.

You can also replace cheese with tofu, plant-based cheese analogues - but use these sparingly because they typically contain lots of processed ingredients and sometimes even fractionated oils, or your own homemade nut cheese.

Nut cheese?

Cashew cheese, specifically. Check out the recipe!

Bon appetit,



Nimesh Bhargava
OFA Nutrition Services Coordinator

Cashew Cheese

Ingredients:

- 1 generous cup raw cashews soaked for at least 2 hours (up to 10, or overnight, is fine), drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast (which is different from baker's or brewer's yeast)
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder - For stronger garlicky flavor, use 3/4 teaspoon garlic powder or 1 crushed garlic clove instead
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more as needed
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup water, plus more as needed

Instructions

- 1) Place the cashews, nutritional yeast, lemon juice, garlic powder, salt, and pepper in a food processor. Pulse repeatedly to break the cashews down, until they form a coarse, wet meal. Scrape the sides of the food processor down with a spatula.
- 2) Turn the motor of the processor on. With the motor running, drizzle in the water and let the cashews process for about 10 seconds. Stop and scrape the machine down again. Continue processing for a full 1-2 minutes, or until the cashew cheese is smooth and thick, adding a tablespoon of extra water if needed. The consistency should be a little bit like hummus.
- 3) Taste the cashew cheese and add lemon, salt, and pepper to taste. If you like, pulse in fresh herbs or other flavorings. Serve. Cashew cheese will keep for up to 6 days in an airtight container in the fridge.

Source: www.thefullhelping.com