

# YUMMY NORTHWEST

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## Easy as pie

I always wondered about the saying that something was “as easy as pie.” My experience making pie of any sort – except where you pour instant pudding into a ready-made crust – was anything but easy.

But then Joyce invited me to make apple pie with her. Not only is Joyce a pleasant person to spend time with, but she is a real whiz in the kitchen. We only made pie, but I have a feeling she would make anything baked look easy.

Joyce grew up on a ranch and learned to bake for people who worked hard and had large appetites. All that practice paid off and now she happily shares her secrets.

If you can, come visit Joyce to taste her pie. If you can't make it to Montana, try her recipe.

## See how it's done



First, peel the apples. If you don't have this nifty peeler, a paring knife will work.

## Patriotic pie

Reportedly, American troops in World War II marched into battle chanting: “For mom and apple pie!”

Although apple pie was not invented in America, it has been widely made and eaten here and, some say, perfected.

English recipes for apple pie (then called apple tart) go back as far as the 14th century, with things like raisins and figs for added sweetness. Sugar took its sweet time to get to England and then America, but when it did, it became a common ingredient in the pie.

Pioneers trekking across the American continent didn't always have apples available so they created a version with crackers and pie spices. You can still find this recipe at [www.kraftfoods.com](http://www.kraftfoods.com).

Of course this begs the question: If you have apples, why would you use crackers? Still, it's worth a taste to see what fueled those hearty pioneers.

You can eat your apple pie plain, or with cheese, or with warm custard or ice cream. But do enjoy a slice soon – preferably homemade!



Roll out the dough to about 1/4 inch thickness. If you can find a plastic sheet that shows you the crust dimensions (try a kitchen store), that makes it even easier.



Mix some sugar into the peeled apples. You don't need much, so don't worry about the exact amount...maybe about 1/2 cup to 8 cups apple slices. Also add some cinnamon; again, just a bit...maybe 1 teaspoon. Put everything in the pie shell. Don't worry if it looks like a huge pile; it'll cook down. Dabs of butter give it extra flavor.



Apple pie leaks, so make sure the top and bottom crust are secured together. Start by using a damp pastry brush to put some water on the edge of the bottom crust to act as glue. After adding the top crust, crimp the edges together. Here, Joyce uses her fingers to make an attractive border.



Cut holes in the top of the crust to let steam escape. Spray the top lightly with water, then sprinkle with sugar. At this point, you can wrap the pie well and freeze. Or bake at 400 degrees for about 30 minutes or until well browned. To prevent the crust edge from burning, cover with a strip of foil.

## Say, that's tasty!

"Thy breathe is like the steame of apple-pyes."  
 – Robert Green (1590), "Arcadia" (according to foodreference.com, this is the first mention of fruit pie)

"Good apple pies are a considerable part of our domestic happiness."  
 – Jane Austen

"If you want to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe."  
 – Carl Sagan

"Pessimism is as American as apple pie – frozen apple pie with a slice of processed cheese."  
 – George F. Will

"You can't have Thanksgiving without a turkey. That's like the Fourth of July with no apple pie or Friday with no two pizzas."  
 – Joey on "Friends"



Crab apples are the only apple native to the United States. European settlers brought all the others.

Johnny Appleseed (born John Chapman, 1774-1845) did not scatter apple seeds but in fact planted fenced nurseries throughout the Midwest. Much of the seed was given to him by cider mills that profited from the orchards.



Here's another way to secure the edges. Use a fork for this version.



A slice is always good with ice cream!

## It starts with the crust

Here's Joyce's recipe for flaky crust.

To 4 cups flour and about 3/4 teaspoon salt, add 2 cups Crisco, cutting into pea-size pieces as you mix with the flour. Put an egg in a cup and fill the cup with milk; whip them together and gently add to flour.

This makes enough for about 7 pies. You can freeze any leftover dough. Just thaw and roll out for the next pie.

## About Yummy Northwest

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest and Montana.

## Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas, and submissions are all most welcome at [Yummy\\_Northwest@hotmail.com](mailto:Yummy_Northwest@hotmail.com). View archives at [yummynorthwest.com](http://yummynorthwest.com).