

Apples and My Favorite Recipe

After being raised on a wide variety of Connecticut apples, it's hard not to be an apple snob. But we do have a few varietals that grow well here in Arizona, depending on your Hardiness Zone. At Bella Terra, we grow Anna apples that I harvest in June, which seems completely counter-intuitive to me. I try to cold store them in the refrigerator, but unless I use them quickly, they tend to shrivel and get soft.



In the White Mountains, we grow Golden Delicious and they harvest on a more typical fall schedule. Golden Delicious are a good for eating and making applesauce. Not the best apple for making pies, because they are less firm and much sweeter, but beggars cannot be choosers.

Recently, Kari Anne at [Thistlewood Farms](#) did a fabulous post

on apples. I was so inspired after reading her blog, that I made an apple pie, not just any apple pie, but what I call Troop 184 Apple Pie.

When my daughter, Elisabeth was in 4th grade, I was a Girl Scout troop leader. I thought it would be a great idea to teach 36 nine-year olds how to make a pie from scratch. Our meetings were 1.5 hours long, not long enough to bake a pie, but long enough to make the dough and peel the apples, etc. I envisioned each girl bringing home a freshly made 9" pie to bake at home. What the heck was I thinking? First of all, trying to get 36 nine-year old girls to pay attention was a feat in itself. But with rolling pins, sugar and flour?

One hundred pounds of apples, 50 lbs of flour, and 15 lbs of sugar later...well, you get the picture. Fortunately, I "pre-made" most of the dough and "pre-cut" most of the apples. We broke into 6 teams of 6 girls, and with lots of parent helpers, each girl left the meeting, covered in flour but with a full size pie to take home. I was exhausted and no one died of food poisoning. All in all, it was a successful meeting.

I wouldn't have survived cutting all those apples without one of these:



It's an apple peeler and corer. I don't know what genius invented it but I marvel every time I use it. I purchased mine several years ago from [William Sonoma](#). They can also be found on **Amazon**. This gadget seems to get a great deal of use at our house, especially when I need to peel larger quantities of apples (can be used for potatoes, too.)





It peels the apple, cores it and then slices it just by the turn of the handle. Works for all apples sizes-just brilliant!



I experimented with several pie dough recipes before I selected this one for my girl scout troop pie making extravaganza. I swear this is my go-to pie crust recipe...Another lifesaver when making large quantities of pie dough, is my Cuisinart. It is SO easy and simple to make a pie crust this way.



Just add all the ingredients and pulse away, adding more ice water as you go to get the proper consistency of dough.



What makes this dough so flaky is the combination of both vegetable shortening and butter. Leaving large chunks of it in the dough makes for pockets of flakiness. Though making this dough from scratch is VERY easy, when in a pinch, I love [Trader Joe's pie crust](#) as a substitute. It's a bit sweeter tasting too. You just have to plan ahead to defrost it properly or it's difficult to lay open.



In this recipe, I used our mountain apples, Golden Delicious. Since they are naturally sweet, I just added less sugar. I prefer a tart and firmer apple for pies. But, being a good Yankee, I use what I have. Lately I've seen so many artistic pie crusts on Pinterest so I tried to be fancy by adding a maple leaf dough cut-out for the border.



You cannot beat the smell of an apple pie baking~~seems so appropriate for this time of year. I hope this inspires you to bake a pie from scratch!



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