

PEAR-CRANBERRY HEART PIE

INGREDIENTS

For the crust

2 1/2 cups all purpose flour
1 tablespoon sugar
3/4 teaspoon salt
10 tablespoons (1 1/4 sticks) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1/3 cup chilled solid vegetable shortening, diced
6 tablespoons (or more) ice water

For the filling

7 ripe Bartlett pears
4 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
1 cup packed dark-brown sugar
3 tablespoons cornstarch
1 1/2 teaspoons coarse salt
1 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise
3 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1 large egg yolk
1 tablespoon heavy cream
1/2 cup apricot preserves

DIRECTIONS

Blend flour, sugar and salt in processor. Add butter and shortening and cut in using on/off turns until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add 6 tablespoons ice water and process until moist clumps form, adding more water by teaspoonfuls if dough is dry. Gather into ball; divide into 2 pieces. Flatten each into disk. Wrap each in plastic; chill 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 375F. On a floured work surface, roll dough into two circles with a diameter slightly larger than 9-inches. Press one of the circles into a pie plate. Place the other one on parchment or wax paper and cover with plastic wrap. Place both in the refrigerator to chill until ready to use.

Prepare a 9-inch pie plate with cookie spray or grease generously. On a lightly floured work surface, roll 1 disk of dough to 1/8 inch thick. Fit into the pie plate. Trim edges flush with rim. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

On a piece of lightly floured parchment paper, roll out remaining disk of dough to 1/8 inch thick. Top with an inverted 9-inch pie plate or a cake ring, and gently press to make a light indentation (this will be your guide for cutting top to fit the pie). Using a small heart-shaped cookie cutter, cut a pattern of hearts out of the round, leaving at least 1/2 inch between cutouts and edge of round. Save the heart cutouts to use around the edge of the pie. Reroll scraps, and cut out as many additional hearts as possible. Transfer parchment with the top to a baking sheet. Refrigerate lattice top and hearts for 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 375F.

Peel, halve, and core pears. Very thinly slice the pears lengthwise. Toss together pears, cranberries, sugar, cornstarch, and salt in a large bowl. Using the tip of a paring knife, scrape vanilla seeds over pear mixture, and toss until seeds have been evenly incorporated. Pour filling into piecrust, gently pressing to make it as level as possible. Dot filling with butter.

To make egg wash, whisk together egg yolk and cream in a small bowl. Lightly brush edge of piecrust with egg wash. Remove top crust and hearts from refrigerator. Gently place another baking sheet on top of top piece, and carefully invert. Slide top crust on top of filling, and remove parchment. Gently press edges of crust to seal, trimming edges of top crust if necessary. Lightly brush lattice with egg wash.

Arrange hearts around edge of pie, overlapping them slightly. Lightly brush top of each square with egg wash as you work to help them adhere.

Bake until crust is golden brown and juices are bubbling gently, 90 to 100 minutes. Tent with foil if crust browns too quickly. Let pie cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes.

Finally, to make the pie shiny, prepare the apricot preserves. Heat them in a saucepan over medium heat until warm. Puree in a food processor until smooth. Press through a fine sieve into a bowl or another saucepan, and reheat if necessary. Brush warm pie with a generous amount of warm apricot glaze. Let cool completely on rack.