Nancy Dante Bennison’s Fresh Blueberry Pie
Makes 1 9-inch pie
A crisp buttery crust piled to the brim with fresh blueberries suspended in a pool of shimmering blueberry sauce is the sensation of the season. When my college classmate heard I was writing a blueberry cookbook, she sent me this recipe, which is just as advertised: “This pie is delicious and different from the traditional blueberry pie.” And indeed it is.

For the pie
6 cups fresh cultivated blueberries
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
3 tablespoons lemon juice
Pinch of fine sea salt
1/4 cup water
2 tablespoons tapioca flour or cornstarch dissolved in 2 tablespoons cold water
1 9-inch pie shell, baked and cooled

1. In a saucepan over medium heat, bring 2 cups of the blueberries, the sugar, cinnamon, lemon zest, lemon juice and water to a boil. Adjust the heat to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the berries are soft and release their juice.
2. Transfer the berries to a blender and puree until smooth.
3. Return the puree to the saucepan, stir in the dissolved tapioca flour or cornstarch and return the pot to the heat. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture comes to a boil. Stir for one minute longer over the heat to fully cook the starch. Transfer to a large bowl and cool to room temperature. (Set the bowl over a pan of ice water if you are in a hurry.)
4. When the puree is cool, stir in the remaining 4 cups of blueberries and pour the filling into the pie shell. Refrigerate for 4 hours, or until cold.

For the whipped cream
1 cup heavy whipping cream
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla

1. In a cold bowl with cold beaters, whip the cream, sugar and vanilla together until it forms soft peaks.
2. Serve with slices of the pie.
All-Butter Pie Dough
Makes enough for 1 double-crust pie or 2 single-crust 9-inch or 10-inch pies
I’m always fiddling with pie dough recipes and adding another little tweak or a new approach. My go-to dough of the moment is a dream to roll out, browns beautifully in the oven, and is flaky. It is similar to the dough I made years ago in our restaurant. We took cold butter pats normally used in the dining room and mixed them into the flour in a giant stand mixer. Then we added water and let the machine handle the rest. I confess I like to use machines to cut a corner here or there when it doesn’t compromise the end result. You can also mix the dough by hand, but if you have an electric mixer with a paddle attachment, go for it.

It’s important to let pie dough hydrate and relax so it shrinks less when you bake it. If it is cold, you can roll it as soon as you mix it, and let it relax and hydrate in the refrigerator or freezer in the pie pan. (If it feels warm, pop it in the fridge for about 20 minutes before rolling.) When I started out, I didn’t understand what I was doing from a technical point of view, but I always rolled out the dough right after mixing it and stacked a week’s worth of pie shells in the walk-in until I needed to bake them. There they were waiting, relaxing and hydrating! This recipe makes an ample amount for 2 crusts, so if you are making a very large pie there will plenty. If you have leftover dough scraps that you don’t want to discard, you can do what my mom always did for us kids: Roll out the dough, spread it with soft butter, sprinkle it with cinnamon sugar and roll it up into a cylinder. Slice and bake for an extra little treat.

4 cups all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons fine sea salt
1 1/4 cups (2 1/2 sticks) cold, unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
10 tablespoons ice water

1. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, mix the flour, sugar, and salt. Add the butter pieces, separating them as you add them, and toss to coat them with flour. Place the bowl in the refrigerator for 10 to 15 minutes to chill the butter and flour.
2. On low speed, with the paddle attachment, mix until the butter is in flat, nickel-size pieces. This should take from 1 to 2 minutes. With the mixer still on low, gradually add the ice water and mix until the dough clumps together and no dry spots remain (you may not use all of it.) Stop before the dough forms a ball. A small handful of clumps should hold together firmly when pressed without cracking at the edges. If it does not, add more water, 1 tablespoon at a time.
3. Tip the clumps onto the countertop and divide them into equal 2 mounds if making a single pie shells. If making a double-crust or lattice pie, make one mound slightly larger than the other. Press the clumps together to form 2 flat disks. Use the dough immediately, or wrap it in plastic wrap and refrigerate it for up to 2 days (the dough will discolor after 2 days). Alternatively, freeze it, in a zipper freezer bag for up to 2 months.
To make by hand: Place the flour, sugar, salt and butter in a bowl. Use your fingers to flatten the pieces of butter and toss them in the flour to coat them. Drizzle the ice water over the dough
and use both hands to toss the liquid and dry ingredients together until the dough forms large clumps. Shape as directed above.

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