1930

Please Pass the Pie!

Thelma Carlson
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker
Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation
Carlson, Thelma (1930) "Please Pass the Pie!," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 10 : No. 7 , Article 3.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol10/iss7/3
Please Pass the Pie!

By Thelma Carlson

"P"ie—a delicious edible, now extant." If this item appears in the dictionaries of the next century, some curious cook, inspired by vague legends of this one-time American favorite, may bring back the art of pie making. But why leave the dead undone for two hundred years when literally millions are now starring for a decent piece of pie?

The charm of the pies which "Mother used to make" was the result of long and constant experience in days when a wedge of pie was the proper "topping off" for every meal of the day. Madame is today too much engaged in bridge scores to see much that is attractive in a kitchen, and pies are no longer pies—but soggy insults.

A good pie must have a good crust. This crust must break easily with a fork, and should be flaky, crisp, tender and light. It should be an even light brown in color, have an almost blistered appearance, and have light and dark shades which are caused by the rough surface.

There are very few ingredients used in pie crust, yet each has a great influence on the finished product. Flours are of different grades, brands and blends. In general it is safe to say that it is best to use a good grade of soft wheat flour. Hard wheat flour will require excess shortening. Experiment till you find a good grade of flour and then stick to it.

The shortening is a very important factor in making the crust, for this is the ingredient that is responsible for the tenderness. Tenderness is the quality which makes it possible to break or crush the crust easily. A flaky layer aids in this respect. The fat forms layers in the dough and keeps it from becoming a firm mass by keeping the water particles of the dough apart. This renders the pastry "short."

The fat should have the proper body or consistency that it may best mix with the flour and stay distributed. If it is too hard, it will not blend properly and the result will be a hard, tough crust. If the oil is too soft, it will seep into the flour too much and prevent it from absorbing the water it should, making the crust too mealy. When water is increased for any reason, the fat must be increased also, to keep the crust tender.

The flavor of the fat should be neutral so that it will not interfere with the flavor of the filling. The flavor should not only be neutral at first, but it should be such that it will not acquire an unpleasant taste during the baking process. The pie crust without salt is flat. For thorough distribution of the salt throughout the mixture, dissolve it in the water.

The water for the cold water pastry should be cold, between 40 and 50 degrees F. in order to keep the shortening cool. For hot water pastry, the water should be boiling.

There are some other ingredients used now and then. Baking powder is sometimes used for a leavening effect. Yeast helps to secure a lighter crust, and adds food value and a certain flavor to it. Sugar may be used to give color to the crust. There should not, however, be over two or three percent used as it would have an effect on the final product.

The manipulation is important. In making cold water pastry it is necessary to have the equipment, especially the board and rolling pin, cool. In the hot water pastry it may be necessary to put the mixing bowl in a pan of hot water if the room is cool. Up to a certain point mixing with a fork gives a tender crust, but after it reaches this point it becomes more tough. Kneading and patting makes the dough tough.

If the dough is made as nearly the size of the pan as possible, the scrap problem is eliminated. If the dough has not been reworked too much, the scraps can be worked in and used on the bottom crust. If used on the top crust it is apt to shrink. Toughness is the cause of shrinking, and the gluten which has been stretched too much, returns to normal while baking.

Pies stick when the filling is too large and runs over the edge, or when the pan in which it has been put has not been thoroughly dried. If the pan is put in the oven a while before it is used, the moisture will evaporate and the pan will be entirely dry.

Raw spots found in pie crusts may be a cause of worry. If there are dents in the pan the entire crust will not touch the metal and thus it will not be baked evenly. Improper mixing might leave lumps of shortening which would melt in baking and make that part of the crust too soft. If the dough is placed improperly in the pans it will cause blisters.

Another reason for raw spots is poor bottom heat. There can be no special temperature and time given for the baking of pies because of the variety of fillings used. A range of from 425 to 600 degrees F., with time regulated accordingly will give satisfactory results.

Who's the Ideal Mother?

"The woman's place is in the home," but—might this home not be a center of economic activity and not merely a place upon which the woman is dependent for food and a name? Is the idea of the old fashioned ideal mother, who spent 24 hours out of every day with her children and house work, still water proof in these days when mechanical power comes to replace hand labor, when woman finds herself with time to call her own? Mr. Carl Lieb, professor at the University of Iowa, threw out these thought-provoking questions to a group of faculty and students during his talk at a recent educational meeting at Iowa State College.

Since 1850 the world has been engaged in substituting power for labor and transferring skill from man to machine. The results have been as astounding as they are inevitable, declared Professor Lieb. The operating capital of a single industry has grown from $50,000 to 2,000,000. The markets have grown. The standard of living has been raised; wages are higher; working hours are shorter and the people are accepting more and more of the social responsibilities. After all this is it then surprising that the home—the often called "center of the universe"—should also be affected? Woman is finding her place in the economic life. Her services are coming to be more and more in demand in the business world and she is answering the urge to go abroad. But what of the home? What of the education of the children?

Professor Lieb pointed out that the modern woman forms a part of the home because she desires it and has children because she wants children, although she realizes that she may have to give up her vocation to gain this end. She sees her work that with the aid of the modern power devices she will have more leisure time. Modernists and sentiment-alists now argue upon her probable use of that time. It is quite possible that the greater part of the education of children should be taken from the home and given into the hands of especially trained instructors, concluded Professor Lieb.