

HOME DINING RECREATION TRAVEL COMMUNITY HEALTH STYLE

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LIVING

NOVEMBER 2012



GIVING BACK



PIE PERFECTED

Sure, turkey is nice on Thanksgiving, but admit it: Throughout the meal, you've really just got your eye on the pie. This year, Marcie's Pies in Santa Ynez has the dessert course covered.

BY GAYLEN DUCKER GRODY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GARY MOSS





Please pass the pie: The Apple Rum Raisin Streusel Pie (recipe on page 70) has a luscious fruit filling and sweet crumbly topping.

Both of these pie recipes are courtesy of Marcie Jimenez from Marcie's Pies (jimenezfamilyfarm.com/pies) in Santa Ynez.

APPLE RUM RAISIN STREUSEL PIE

Use a purchased unbaked piecrust or your favorite piecrust recipe.

Crust

1 9-inch single piecrust with fluted edge, unbaked

Filling

¼ cup raisins
¼ cup dark rum
¾ cup sugar or more to taste
2 tablespoons tapioca
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
8 cups peeled sliced apples (Granny Smith or other tart apples)

Topping

½ cup brown sugar, packed
½ cup flour
¼ cup butter, chilled

Preheat oven to 400°F.

For filling: Soak raisins in rum overnight or for several hours. Mix dry ingredients and sprinkle over apples. Stir to coat apples, and then add rum raisin mixture. Let apple-raisin mixture sit at room temperature to blend flavors while preparing topping.

For topping: In a separate bowl, mix sugar and flour. Cut in butter with pastry cutter or knives until pea-size crumbles form.

Arrange apple filling in piecrust. Sprinkle topping mixture evenly over filling.

Place pie pan on baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 375°F and continue baking for 30 to 40 minutes until apple filling is thick and bubbling. Remove pie from oven and cool at room temperature.

Serves 6 to 8.

PUMPKIN PECAN PIE

Use a purchased unbaked piecrust or your favorite piecrust recipe.

Crust

1 9-inch deep-dish pie shell, unbaked

Pumpkin Layer

1 cup canned pure pumpkin
¼ cup sugar
1 large egg
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground ginger

Pecan Layer

1 cup pecan halves, coarsely chopped (reserve a few whole pecans for garnish, if desired)

Top Layer

2 large eggs
¼ cup light corn syrup
¼ cup sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Cut the squash in Preheat oven to 375°F.

For pumpkin layer: Combine all ingredients in bowl. Spread mixture gently over bottom of unbaked pie shell.

For pecan layer: Sprinkle chopped pecans over pumpkin layer. If desired, arrange whole pecans in decorative pattern.

For top layer: Beat 2 eggs slightly. Stir in corn syrup, sugar, and vanilla until well blended. Gently spoon mixture over pecans and pumpkin layer. (Pecans will rise to the surface.)

Bake pie for 1 hour or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Cool before serving.

Serves 6 to 8.

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS about Thanksgiving dinner is the pie, and Marcie Jimenez from Marcie's Pies (jimenezfamilyfarm.com/pies) in Santa Ynez probably knows that better than anyone. When Jimenez was growing up, her mom taught her how to bake. "I really got an appreciation for homemade pies from her," she says. Now Jimenez, co-owner (with her husband, Gustavo) of Jimenez Family Farm in the Santa Ynez Valley, sells her own homemade fruit pies at farmers' markets throughout Central and Southern California (they can also be special ordered and picked up at the farm). All of her pies, like the pumpkin pecan and apple rum raisin varieties shown here, are made with fresh ingredients from the farm or are otherwise locally sourced as much as possible.

Marcie's Pies also gives back locally: They offer a fundraising program to benefit schools and sports organizations in the Santa Ynez Valley. "I've been involved with 4-H and have been a parent of soccer and baseball players as well as scouts," says Jimenez. "We've always participated in fundraisers, so I thought the pies would be a good way to help out." Here's how it works: Marcie's Pies offers six different flavors each month, like the triple berry crumble, pumpkin, old-fashioned apple, strawberry-rhubarb, French apple, and blackberry pies available in November. Organizations can submit their prepaid orders, and the pies will be delivered or available for pickup on a specified date. A portion of the sales go toward each fundraiser.

So this Thanksgiving, whether you get a fundraiser going, pick up a few pies from Marcie's for your celebration, or make one of the recipes Jimenez has kindly shared with us here, we can't imagine a sweeter way to give thanks.

Pie Tips From a Pro

Whether you're making one of the pies here or a traditional family recipe, these three pie-making pointers from Marcie Jimenez of Marcie's Pies in Santa Ynez guarantee good results.

To transfer rolled-out crust dough from the work surface to a pie dish: Fold the dough in half and then in half again (to form a triangle). Place the folded dough in the pie dish with the point in the center. Quickly unfold it to line the dish, pressing the dough into place. If the crust tears, patch it, don't reroll it (rerolling makes the crust tough).

To make a fruit pie without a soggy crust: Start baking the pie at a high temperature to set the crust, then reduce the heat and bake until filling is bubbling and thickened.

To save time and sanity on the big day: The mixture of flour and butter and/or shortening for piecrusts can be made in advance and stored in the refrigerator or freezer. Just add water, mix, and roll.



There's nothing better than pecan pie—unless, of course, it's Pumpkin Pecan Pie on Thanksgiving (recipe opposite).



Strawberry-rhubarb
and blueberry-
blackberry "pielets"
are ready for pickup
at Simply Pies in
Santa Barbara.



PIE, PIE, EVERYWHERE

More places to find that perfect pie for Thanksgiving.

By Angela Pettera

Avila Valley Barn (avilavalleybarn.com) in San Luis Obispo is a fun spot to take the kids, pick produce, taste apple cider, and shop for pies made with produce grown right on the farm. Beginning in October, a Fall Harvest Apple Pie is stuffed with a combination of sweet and tart apples like Gravenstein, Braeburn, and Jonagold. The Barn offers many flavors of pie daily in November including olallieberry, apple-blueberry, cherry, and pumpkin.

Cider Creek Bakery & Deli, (cidercreekbakery.com) with locations in Paso Robles and most recently Atascadero, began life in a green barn in Templeton. The Atascadero location will only be able to crank out a few hundred pies this holiday season, but the Paso store will making its usual 2,500 or so. Flavors include double-crust apple, Dutch apple, caramel apple, apple crisp, boysenberry, pumpkin, rum and brandy mincemeat, and pecan.

Fresh & Fabulous Cafe (myfreshandfabulous.com) in Oxnard is a cute cafe with a bakery counter that turns out cupcakes, cookies, scones, and pies by special order. Holiday pies include pumpkin (the specialty), pecan, and apple.

The Godmother of Malibu Cafe & Catering (thegodmother.com) is happy to call Kristine Bocchino pastry chef. She'll whip up pies and tarts by special order when you call her at 310-699-0099. Some of the winter flavors are lattice-top French apple pie, organic nut and fig tart, maple-pumpkin tart, cranberry brown-butter tart, and chocolate pecan pie.

I Would Rather Be Baking Co. (iwouldratherbebaking.com) is a custom baking company created by Theresa Delgado, who bakes pies to order for delivery. She tells us that her customers' favorite flavors for the holidays are pumpkin, apple streusel, and pecan, but she also does a mean banana cream.

Linn's (linnsfruitbin.com) in Cambria makes the best olallieberry pies and preserves in the 805—and possibly the world. Their pies can be picked up during the holidays at the Easy-As-Pie Café, also in Cambria. Year-round they make that amazing olallieberry, old-fashioned apple, Dutch apple, pecan, and pumpkin. Starting in early November they also make satsuma plum pie (reputedly as good as the olallieberry), cranberry-apple, raisin, and apple-raisin.

Marie Callender's (mariecallenders.com) makes some incredibly good cream pies, especially the banana cream and the German chocolate pies. Either one might make a nice addition to a holiday dinner. Other flavors include the more traditional pumpkin, rhubarb, custard, apple, French apple, pecan, and no-sugar-added apple. The Camarillo location accepts online ordering through the website for convenience.

Pattibakes (pattibakes.com) owner Patti Wicks cranks out pies with her staff in her Buellton bakery every day. Flavors like apple, coconut cream, lemon meringue, Key lime, pecan, and pumpkin are usually on hand but should be preordered to ensure availability. Wicks is also working on a gluten-free piecrust that should be ready in time for the holidays.

Rabalais' Bakery & Bistro (rabalaisbistro.com) in Santa Paula has Southern charm and a Cajun-inflected menu. Pies (like country apple and southern pecan), cakes (like the pecan praline cheesecake), and cobblers (like the cranberry apple) can be ordered one or two days in advance. There are also small sweet potato galettes with goat cheese that lean to the savory side for a very different way to end a holiday meal, sort of like eating a cheese plate instead of dessert.

Simply Pies (simplypiessb.com) in Santa Barbara makes a wide range of completely wonderful pies using local, organic ingredients. Their piecrust is the stuff of legend. They have individual pies (3-inch), 6-inch, or 9-inch whole pies, and frozen ones for reheating later. They also make no-sugar-added, vegan, or gluten-free pies upon request. Flavors in November and December include apple, pecan, pumpkin, lemon dream, and chocolate cream.

SloCo Pasty Co. (slocopastyco.com) in San Luis Obispo is a restaurant/pub dedicated to Cornish pasties—folded pies with braided crusts that serve one. Owners Gwynne and Kurt Stump mostly make savory pasties, but they have a menu of sweets that includes pumpkin pie inspired by Harry Potter's pumpkin pasties. They also make apple pie and caramel-apple cheesecake pasties.

Solvang Pie Co. (solvangpieco.com) from Creekside Apple Ranch sells pies at the Solvang Farmers Market on Wednesdays and the Santa Barbara Farmers Markets on Tuesdays and Saturdays. They use produce from the ranch to bake apple, pumpkin, and rhubarb pies all winter. ♦