

# SOUR CHERRY PIE

SERVES 6 TO 8

**OVEN TEMPERATURE** 425°F/220°C

**BAKING TIME** 40 to 50 minutes

*S*our cherry pie is my husband's and my favorite pie, and it was also my father's. I made it for his July birthday every year until he was ninety-seven, always tweaking it a little more toward perfection. This is my ultimate rendition. The filling is now thickened before baking the pie to make it easier to apply the lattice. The number of strips is increased to fourteen so that they are spaced just widely enough apart for everyone to see the beautiful bright red cherries but closely enough to maintain the juiciness of the filling. I also include the optional addition of cherry concentrate from Michigan. Because sour cherries have a lamentably short season, I give instructions for freezing. Here, too, are two variations, including one made with a wonderful preserved product in a jar. This pie is just too good to miss. I once met a little boy of eight who confided in me that his dream was to have a home-made cherry pie. My heart went out to him—so I baked him one!

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT** One 9 inch pie plate | An expandable flan ring or 12 inch round cardboard template | A pastry jagger or pizza wheel for cutting the lattice strips | A baking stone or baking sheet | A foil ring to protect the edges of the crust

## PERFECT FLAKY AND TENDER CREAM CHEESE PIE CRUST

	VOLUME	WEIGHT	
dough for a 14 strip lattice 9 inch pie (page 189)	.	22 ounces	624 grams

**ROLL THE DOUGH FOR THE BOTTOM PIE CRUST** Remove the dough for the bottom crust from the refrigerator. If necessary, let it sit for about 10 minutes, or until it is malleable enough to roll.

On a floured pastry cloth, pastry mat, or between two sheets of lightly floured plastic wrap, roll the bottom crust into a  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thick disc, 12 inches in diameter or large enough to line the pie plate and extend enough to turn about halfway under the border. Lift the dough from time to time and add flour as necessary to keep it from sticking.

Before measuring the dough, make sure to lift it from the surface to allow it to shrink in so that it doesn't retract when set in the pie plate. Use the expandable flan ring, or a sharp knife with the cardboard template as a guide, to cut a 12 inch disc of dough. Layer the scraps on top of the refrigerated dough for the lattice crust.



**LINE THE PIE PLATE** Transfer the dough to the pie plate, easing it into place. If necessary, trim the edge to make it even. Turn under the crust so that it is even with the edge of the pie plate. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for a minimum of 30 minutes or up to 3 hours.

## FILLING

	VOLUME	WEIGHT	
fresh sour cherries	about 3¾ cups (3½ cups pitted)	24 ounces (20 ounces pitted)	680 grams (567 grams pitted)
sugar (see Notes, page 204)	¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons	6.2 ounces	175 grams
cornstarch	2½ tablespoons	0.8 ounce	22 grams
fine sea salt	a pinch	.	.
pure almond extract	¼ teaspoon (1.2 ml)	.	.
cherry concentrate (see Notes, page 204; optional)	2 tablespoons (30 ml)	1.4 ounces	40 grams

**MAKE THE FILLING** Pit the cherries (see Notes, page 204), placing them in a medium bowl along with any juices that form. There should be 3½ cups/20 ounces/567 grams.

In a medium saucepan, stir together the sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Gently stir in the cherries along with any juices. Let the mixture sit for at least 10 minutes to liquefy the sugar mixture. Over medium heat, stirring constantly, bring it to a boil and simmer for about 1 minute until thickened. Scrape the cherry mixture into a wide bowl or pie plate and let it cool completely. Stir in the almond extract and optional cherry concentrate, and scrape the mixture into the dough-lined pie plate.

**ROLL THE DOUGH AND MAKE THE LATTICE** Roll the second disc of dough into a 12 by 11 inch oval (⅛ inch thick) and cut fourteen 12 inch long, ¾ inch wide strips, using a ruler and the pastry jagger or pizza cutter. (If you are right-handed, start from the left side.)

To create a woven lattice, arrange half of the strips evenly over the filling, starting in the center. Gently curve back every other strip, a little past the center, so that the next strip can be placed perpendicular to the first strips, right at the center. Uncurve the strips so that they lie flat on top of the perpendicular strip. Working in the same direction, curve back the strips that were not curved back the first time. Lay a second perpendicular strip on top and uncurve the strips. Repeat with 2 more strips.

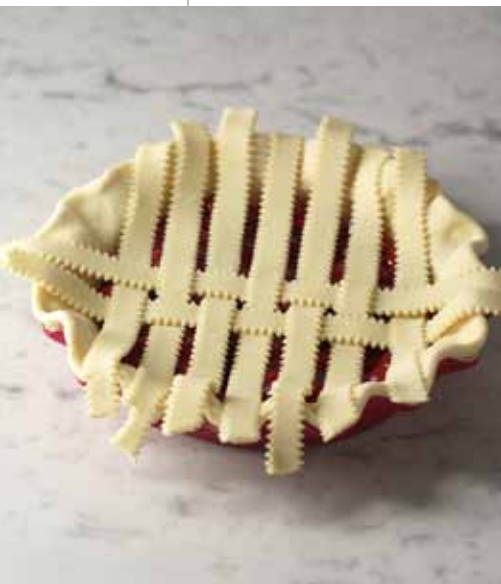
Apply the remaining 3 strips to the other side of the pie. Start toward the center and work in the opposite direction toward the edge. Remember always to alternate the strips that are curved back so that the strips weave in and out.



Use sharp kitchen scissors to trim the strips to a ½ inch overhang. Moisten under the ends of each strip with water and tuck the overhang under the bottom crust border, pressing down to make it adhere and to keep the border from being too thick. If desired, crimp the border using your forefinger and thumb.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Arranging the first lattice strips. Curving back every other strip and placing the perpendicular strip on top. Curving back the alternate strips and placing the second perpendicular strip.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Uncurving the strips; the beginning of the lattice pattern. The complete lattice pattern with the ends ready to be trimmed. Trimmed edges tucked under the bottom crust and pressed down.

Refrigerate the pie for at least 45 minutes, loosely covered with plastic wrap. Just before baking, if a crunchy and sparkling effect is desired, spritz or brush the lattice with a little milk or water (avoid the border because it will get too dark on baking) and dust it lightly with sugar.

**PREHEAT THE OVEN** Forty-five minutes or longer before baking, set an oven rack at the lowest level and place the baking stone or baking sheet on it. Place a large sheet of non-stick aluminum foil or foil lightly coated with nonstick cooking spray on top of the stone to catch any juices. Preheat the oven to 425°F/220°C.

**BAKE THE PIE** Place the foil ring on top of the pie to protect the edges from overbrowning and set the pie on the foil-topped baking stone. Bake for 20 minutes. For even baking, rotate the pie halfway around. Continue baking for 20 to 30 minutes, or until thickly bubbling all over and the center is slightly puffed.

**COOL THE PIE** Cool on a wire rack for at least 3 hours before cutting. When set, the filling will remain juicy with just a little flow. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**STORE** Room temperature, 2 days; refrigerated, 4 days.

**NOTES** A large heavy hairpin is the ideal sour cherry pitter. It works well to insert the prongs into a cork, especially a champagne cork that has a rounded end. Insert the looped end of the hairpin into the stem end of the cherry, hook it around the pit, and pull it out.

To freeze the cherries, after pitting, add ¼ cup/1.8 ounces/50 grams of the sugar. Place the cherry mixture in a quart-size canning jar and mark on the cap the amount of sugar added so that you will remember to subtract it from the total amount of sugar when making the pie. In a freezer that maintains a temperature below 0°F/-18°C, the cherries will last for 3 years or even longer. Defrost them either overnight in the refrigerator or for a few hours at room temperature before adding the rest of the ingredients.

The amount of sugar listed in the chart is the amount that I usually use, but some years and some varieties of sour cherries are more tart and I may use as much as 1 cup/7 ounces/200 grams.

Cherry concentrate is a secret given to me by Justin Rachid of American Spoon. He recommended a brand called Michelle's Miracle (available from [www.michellesmiracle.com](http://www.michellesmiracle.com)), an intensely concentrated sour cherry syrup made from Montmorency sour cherries. It adds an astonishing depth of flavor. Creator Michelle White advises that refrigerated or frozen it keeps just about indefinitely.

### *Variation:* "CHARRANT" PIE

Currants, tart and tiny bright red globes, come into season in early July, at the same time as sour cherries, and make an exciting addition to cherry pie. Stuffed into the cherries, they keep the cherries full and plump and seem to give more cherry taste without imparting a flavor of their own. No one will ever guess what the mysterious enhancer is or why this cherry pie has so much delicious extra flavor and texture.

Choose  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup/2 ounces/58 grams of the smallest currants available. Stuff each one into the center of a pitted cherry. Use a total of 1 cup/7 ounces/200 grams of sugar and 2 tablespoons plus  $2\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons/1 ounce/28 grams cornstarch. Be very gentle when stirring so that the currants don't pop out. Alternatively, the currants can simply be added to the cherry mixture, but the presentation is much more dramatic to stuff them inside the cherries!

### *Variation:* FRUIT PERFECT CHERRY PIE

	VOLUME	WEIGHT	
2 jars (14 ounces each) Fruit Perfect Cherries (see page 525)	.	27.5 ounces	780 grams
cornstarch	1 tablespoon	.	10 grams
water	1 tablespoon (15 ml)	0.5 ounce	15 grams
sugar	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	1.8 ounces	50 grams

Empty the jarred cherries, with their thickened juices, into a medium bowl. In one of the Fruit Perfect jars, stir together the cornstarch and water to dissolve the cornstarch. Gently and evenly stir this mixture into the cherries with the sugar. Bake as for Sour Cherry Pie (page 204), but at 400°F/200°C for 30 to 40 minutes.