

Fruity Apple and Bramble Pie



Perthshire is renowned for its wonderful summer soft fruits and gorgeous autumn Orchard fruits but winter can prove a difficult time to stick to seasonal and local produce. Our choice of fruit is more limited and it's tempting to turn to imported fruit to keep up your 5-a-day. Let's be honest, there are only so many carrots and sprouts you can get a child to eat!

That's why, a number of years ago, Rendall's Frozen Fruits based in Blairgowrie came up with the idea of freezing their delicious summer soft fruits and autumn plums and apples as soon as they were picked. This locks in all the flavour and goodness and gives an all year round convenient and delicious product. The myth that frozen isn't as nutritious as fresh has long since been expelled. In fact, fruit picked and blast chilled immediately has more of the beneficial vitamins, antioxidants and minerals than its fresh counterpart, picked and transported hundreds of miles.

Frozen fruit is hugely versatile and is a great addition to all mealtimes. It gives you a great burst of the vitamins needed to fight off winter germs and keep you full of get up and go. Stir it into hot porridge or natural yoghurt at breakfast or blend it with orange juice for a mid morning smoothie – no need to chill! It makes perfect sorbet with little fuss, simply let it thaw a little and stick in the liquidiser with just a little sugar and, if you're cooking for adults, a splash of fizzy wine.

Of course, flu busting smoothies and high energy porridge toppings make frozen fruits a health conscious choice for the winter months. But my favourite way to enjoy it is in a very naughty fruit pie, served hot with cream or ice-cream. It reminds me of my nana, standing in the kitchen rolling out pastry and then spooning the deep red filling into the blind baked case. Thoughts of sitting on the draining board with the heavy mixing bowl, licking leftover berry mixture off of her big wooden spoon, the smell of fresh baked pie wafting through the wee house makes every bite of this wonderful winter pudding so much more delicious. So whether it's your mum's custard with apple crumble or stewed rhubarb stirred into thick creamy rice, try a hot, fruity pudding to whisk you back to childhood and fill you with warmth and comfort.

We've used frozen apple and bramble filling but all Rendalls Frozen Fruits work equally as well and require a similar quantity. The pie filling is also delicious spooned warm over custard, ice-cream or rice pudding. Glorious!

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Ingredients

Shortcrust Pastry (to line and lid)
250gms plain flour
125gms butter
70gms Castor Sugar
½ beaten egg
water to bind if needed
Knob Butter
100gms Castor Sugar
1kg bag of Apple and Bramble Mix
1 teaspoon nutmeg
Dash of Port (optional)
Cornflour to thicken
8" diameter Pie Dish, about 1" deep

Method

For The Pastry

1. Preheat oven to 180C / Gas Mark
2. Rub together flour, sugar and butter until the mixture resembles bread crumbs.
3. Add the egg and mix until it binds together – you may require a little water for this to happen.
4. Take a third out of the mixture and lay aside for the lid.
5. Roll out the remaining pastry until about ½ cm thick. Tip: flour on your work top will make this job much easier.
6. Line your pie dish with the pastry and trim the edge into a neat finish.
7. Bake blind (add a circle of greaseproof paper to the bottom of the pie and pour in either baking beans or broth mix if you don't have any) in oven for 10 – 12 mins.

For the Filling

1. On a medium heat, caramelize the butter, sugar and port and add the apple and bramble mix and nutmeg. This cooks from frozen no problem.
2. Bring to the boil, stirring occasionally.
3. Thicken with corn flour (follow instructions on your corn flour pack) and remove from the heat.

To Make Pie

1. Spoon the filling into the baked pie.
2. Roll out the remaining pastry and top the pie dish with this lid.
3. Sprinkle with brown sugar.
4. Place back in the oven for a further 10 – 15 minutes until the pastry is golden brown.

Serve hot or cold with custard, cream or ice cream. This pie will keep in the fridge for at least three days.

If you're pushed for time or under the banner that says life is too short to make pastry you can cheat and use ready to roll shortcrust pastry!