

Ridiculous Rhubarb-Strawberry Pie

Ummm . . . I made a pie. I made like the whole thing—the crust, the topping, all of it. See, this jewhungry author only figured out how to cook about 2 years ago so there is still a vast array of foods I have NO IDEA how to make and a majority of them I find very intimidating. Pies were in this category. However, when the hubby and I were registering for our wedding I made the genius decision to register for a pastry cutter thinking that one day I would bake a dang pie. Well, that one day came about 7 months after our wedding when the Whole Foods in our neighborhood was having an amazing sale on local strawberries. Four pints of strawberries later and I was on my way home ready to face a pie. Now, my dear friend, Chicago Red, is a pie mistress and even instituted Friday Pie Day, which just sounds delicious, but I digress. The point is I know and love a pie mistress so I was nervous to disappoint.



Upon scouring the internet and finding most pie crust recipes calling for shortening, I found a recipe on a blog called Sweet Mary and it turned out to be sensational (though I did

learn the lesson the hard way that I MUST run an egg wash over any exposed crust and to go ahead and double the recipe if I want a gorgeous lattice topping). Another lesson I learned is the danger of using frozen fruit. I had no access to fresh rhubarb so I was forced to use frozen and of course, the end result was a little watery. Regardless, the pie was delicious and I will attempt to make it again with all fresh ingredients.

Oh, also? TONIGHT, jewhungry co-author and playwright extraordinaire, Jeremy, is debuting his insanely hilarious show, You're Being Ridiculous at the Gorilla Tango Theater in Chicago. I dedicate this post and this pie to him! Also, go see the show.



Pie Dough:

1 1/4 unbleached all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup cold unsalted butter cut into 1/4 inch cubes

3 tablespoons very cold water

Here are my tips/tricks to keep in mind:

Pie dough is easier to roll when it is cold, cold, cold. So, I put my mixing bowl, chopped butter, and a small bowl of water right into the freezer for about 15 minutes before starting. Also, every baker will tell you to work fast. As soon as the butter starts warming up, things get more challenging. I also have a Kitchen Aid Mixer, which is probably my most beloved possession. You can also do this by hand, it really won't matter.

Also, this recipe makes one crust. If you are doing a double crust, double the recipe (of course!).

By hand: Stir flour, sugar, and salt in a bowl. Using a pastry cutter, cut the butter into the flour mixture until the texture looks like coarse meal with the butter pieces about the size of small peas. Add the water and mix with a fork just until the dough pulls together.

In a stand mixer with the paddle attachment: Stir the flour, sugar, and salt in the mixer bowl. Add the butter and toss with a fork to coat. Mix on medium-low until it looks like coarse meal with the butter pieces about the size of small peas. Add the water and mix on low just until the dough pulls together.

Transfer the dough to your work surface. If you are doing a double crust, divide the dough in half. Put the half you are not using in the fridge while you work. Pat the half you are using into a ball. Flatten into a disk with 6-8 gentle taps of the rolling-pin. As you work, lift the dough and give it a quarter turn. You can keep dusting the top of the dough, work surface, and/or rolling-pin as needed so things don't stick. Roll out into a round about 12 inches in diameter and about 1/4 inch thick. To get the dough in the pie dish, roll it halfway right on to the rolling-pin. Lift up and slip the pie

dish right underneath the dough. Center. And, lay it down gently. Press into the pan. Cut off edges and leave about 3/4 inch of overhang.

At this point, you need a pie recipe! I usually lightly brush the bottom dough with beaten egg when I do fruit pies. This will cook a bit when in the oven and prevents the bottom of the dough from being soggy. Who likes a soggy crust? Not me! Obviously, you will repeat the steps above after making the filling if you are making a double crust pie. Then, you can do the edges as you wish. Crimp or whatever you want.



For the filling:

3 1/2 cups of 1/2 inch thick slices of trimmed rhubarb

1 16-ounce container of strawberries, hulled and halved (about 3 1/2 cups)

1/2 cup packed golden brown sugar

1/2 cup sugar

1/4 cup cornstarch

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 400 F. Combine first 7 ingredients in bowl. Toss gently to blend. Roll out one dough disk on floured surface to the size of your pie pan. Place in pie pan and trim the excess around the edges. Egg wash the bottom of the crust with beaten egg. Pour the filling into the crust. Roll out the second disk of dough. Cut into strips about 3/4" wide. Arrange one set of strips on the pie. Space them out evenly. Then form a lattice with the remaining strips. To form a lattice, it is just like weaving. There should be an over-under pattern. I should have really taken photos of the whole process and written my own steps. I will keep that in mind for a future lattice pie. For now, take a look at the Food Network's directions.

Once the lattice is finished and placed on top of the pie, trim and crimp the edges. Then, egg wash the whole top. Bake at 400 for about 25 minutes. Reduce temp to 375 and bake till golden and bubbling. Perhaps, this will take about another 45-60 minutes. Cool completely to let set.

Back to Life



Well friends, it's been several weeks since this jewhungry author wrote anything on this here blog so it's about time I

got to it.

The past 2 weeks have been a blur—a messy, difficult, exhausting but still with shades of sunshine and love blur.

My Papa (Grandpa) passed away on Tuesday, April 26th, at 5:30 am. After a few days in the hospital followed by about 5 days in hospice, my beloved Papa passed away. He was 87 years of age at the time of his death and to some, it wouldn't seem shocking to have a grandfather pass at that age but for our family, his passing really was a shock. The reality of our parents' and grandparents' true age is, at times rationally understood, but generally, not full comprehended. Though logically, I understood my Papa to be an elderly man—it's why we insisted our traditional, Orthodox Jewish wedding take place in the Southern Appalachian town they live in rather than have the ease of a kosher wedding in Teaneck, NJ.

However, it wasn't until we arrived at my Papa's bedside the Friday of chol hamoed that I realize just how old my Papa was. But I have to tell ya, even with the memories of the devastating and heartbreaking final days spent by his side, I will always remember my Papa as being larger than life in every possible way. He loved to tell stories (most notably, one about the best corn beef sandwich he ever had (corn beef being one of his last coherent requests, which my brother and sister-in-law brought up from Atlanta, before entering hospice) and his love of music and theater was passed down into every one of us grandkids. I don't know the type of man my Papa was when he was my age but as a grandfather, he was loving and kind and attentive and truly enjoyed spending every second he could with us and I will always be grateful for that blessing.

Now, the stress of watching a beloved family member die is really enough for any one person but add the stress of trying to keep kosher during Pesach in a household that doesn't necessarily keep the same type of kosher and well, you got yourself a really obnoxious pickle. Confession time: Until

my husband and I have the space and kids, we plan to spend every Pesach with his parents in Jersey. It's just easier. It is by no means a value judgement on my side of the family. It's just easier and I think this past Pesach proved that it's not just easier on us but on EVERYONE. I've said it before and I'll say it again; I didn't decide to keep kosher to alienate my family and friends but decided to keep kosher to live a more spiritually fulfilling life. I want everyone who walks into our house to feel like they can eat at our table. So, with that decision came tougher decisions—where to spend Pesach? It was a difficult phone call, having to tell Mom that Pesach would be a Jersey holiday for us, but to her credit, she got it and was supportive and I will always be grateful for that. However, here we were, not 6 months after that phone call, having to figure out how to feed everyone in Mom's kitchen during Pesach. And to my mom's credit, in the middle of everything else she was dealing with, the woman kashered her kitchen, brought out the plastic-ware and we did this thing.

It wasn't all hunky dory, don't get it twisted. It was frustrating at times. I mean, how much kosher for Passover bag n' bake chicken can one person eat? But it was my genius friend, Jackie, who made a point that completely allowed that frustration fly out the window. The morning of my Papa's death, as I was running errands for mom, I'm on the phone with my Jackie, just venting like we do, when she says to me, "Whit, how amazing is it that in spite of that difficult conversation about not spending Pesach in Asheville or Atlanta, here is your Grandfather, bringing your entire family together and showing all of you that you can do this. What a gift." Well if that didn't just verbally slap me in the face with glory than I don't know what will. My Jackie is a genius. And she was right. We had 5 days of Pesach, including one shabbat, with all my crazy family members in Asheville and we did it. Hell, My sister-in-law and I even created an amazing new soup using a Vitamix and every tomato

in Asheville and it was damn good. There was a kosher for Passover mashed potato bar one night and even a quinoa pilaf (quinoa from Bolivia, thank you very much)! I mean, I don't mean to brag, but we nailed Passover 2011. A fete I never would have thought possible. Thanks Papa.



Papa and Grandma dancing at my wedding - Aug. 15, 2010

Vitamix, Vitadelicious Tomato and Kale Soup

WHAT??

10 whole tomatoes, stemmed

a bunch of kale

1 large onion, diced

Olive oil

3 cloves of garlic, diced

4 cups of water

1 large russet potato, peeled

Salt

Pepper

Shredded mozzarella

Italian parsley

HOW??

Clean tomatoes and place into Vitamix in 2 groups of 5. Press on and watch it do its thang. Put aside.

Meanwhile, turn stove to medium high and heat 4 table spoons of olive oil in the bottom of a large stock pot. Add onions and garlic and saute until onions are translucent. Next, add the kale. Sautee kale for 2 to 3 minutes. Next, add all those tomatoes and the four cups of water. Bring the entire thing to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer and let cook for 30 – 40 minutes or until kale is good and soft. During the last 10 minutes of simmer time, add your peeled potato. The starch of the potato will help thicken the soup. Add seasonings as needed. Once done, serve hot (leave potato in the soup but don't serve it) and garnish with cheese and parsley.