

Cherry pie is a dessert favorite for summer but, honestly, I was never all that crazy about it. Probably because it was always made from canned cherry filling, too sweet, and too reminiscent of cherry flavored medicine.

However, now that I have my own cherry trees I've been experimenting with different combinations and find that I love a good cherry pie.

I've added lavender and cream cheese to the crust of this cherry pie, and lavender to the filling to give a tasty twist to an old favorite.

Lavender Cherry Pie

Pie Crust:

2 cups unbleached flour
1 tsp. salt
1 Tbsp. culinary lavender, ground with a spice grinder
1/2 cup shortening
3 tablespoons cream cheese
4-5 Tbsp. cold water

Stir flour well before measuring, spoon into measuring cup and level off with a knife. Pour into a medium sized mixing bowl and repeat for second cup. Add salt and lavender and stir. Slice chunks of shortening into the flour and add the cream cheese, cutting both into the flour with a pastry cutter until the pieces are small and worked into the flour.

Turn the cold water faucet on to the smallest stream of water you can get before it starts to drip (take a minute to experiment). Place flour mixture under the stream, tossing quickly with a fork until the dough starts to come together. Continue to mix with the fork just until the dough forms a ball, adding more water as necessary.

Divide the dough in half and roll with a rolling pin (center to edge) until each half is about 1/8-inch thick. Line a pie dish with one crust. Heat the oven to 375 °.

Filling:

4 cups fresh or frozen tart cherries
1 cup sugar
4 Tbsp. tapioca
3 Tbsp. culinary lavender, ground in a spice grinder
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
Glaze (optional):
1 egg white
1 Tbsp. sugar

Mix all filling ingredients in a bowl and pour into crust-lined pie dish. Top with second crust and crimp the edges. Cut slits in the top to allow the steam to escape. (If you like a shiny crust, whip the egg white with a fork and brush onto the crust with a pastry brush then sprinkle with sugar to form glaze.) Bake at 375 ° for 1 hour. Allow pie to cool completely before serving to prevent slices from falling apart.