

LEITE'S CULINARIA



Tomato Pie

by Roy Finamore

from [Tasty: Get Great Food on the Table Every Day](#)

(Houghton Mifflin, 2007)

I first ate tomato pie like this in the '80s—at a tea shop in Connecticut. I couldn't imagine it when I saw it on the menu, and that's usually a trigger for my ordering something. What a good thing this turned out to be to eat in the middle of the afternoon: a big biscuit-crust pie filled with sliced ripe tomatoes—real tomatoes—with a little tang of cheese. But creamy, too. The creamy secret is mayo.

This is one of those times when I ease up on my tomato stance. It's sublime when you make it with ripe tomatoes that you've gotten from the farmer who grew them and they're still warm with the sun. But, you know, this tastes fine with the best plum tomatoes you can find in the winter.

To make this lunch, serve the pie with the simplest salad possible. Get a bag of mesclun in the grocery and toss it with extra-virgin olive oil, then add good salt and a few drops of the best wine vinegar you have—no pepper. Or, if you're making this when it's cold outside, use the inside leaves of a head of escarole and dress the salad (use more vinegar) when you put the pie into the oven.

INGREDIENTS

For the pastry

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

Coarse salt

8 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces and chilled

2/3 cup milk

For the filling

3 pounds ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and sliced thick

2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

1/4 pound best white cheddar, shredded

Coarse salt

2/3 cup mayonnaise

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 400°F (200°C).

Make the pastry

1. Put the flour, baking powder, and about 1/2 teaspoon salt in a bowl and stir with a fork. Drop in the butter and cut it into the flour until the butter pieces are about the size of small peas. Do this with a pastry blender, two knives, or your fingers. Pour in the milk and stir until you have a dough that hasn't quite come together. Dump it on the counter and knead it a few times to work in the dry flour.

2. Divide the dough in half. Roll one half out until it is large enough to line a 10-inch pie plate. The other half can sit unless the kitchen is hot. If it is, refrigerate the dough (or work fast).

Make the filling

1. Mix the tomatoes with the herbs, half the cheddar, and some salt. Pat this out evenly in the pastry. Spread the tomatoes with the mayo and scatter the rest of the cheese on top.

2. Roll out the rest of the biscuit dough, and top the pie. Trim the top and bottom crusts back to the rim of the pie plate, leaving no overhang. You can seal the crusts with either a fork or your fingers.

3. Bake the pie until it's golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Let it cool for a while before serving. It wants to be warm, not hot.

4. You can reheat slices in the microwave. Or in the oven, fellow Luddites.

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