



I came up with this recipe because I went to make a version of the [Banana Apple Cake](#) (I make that all the time) except I was going to use blackberries and blackcurrants rather than apples, which works very well, but when I went to the cupboard I realised I'd already used up the ground almonds. Luckily I had bought whole almonds because I saw a delicious looking treat,

[Blueberry Tartlettes](#)

, and intended making them at some point (still have to get around to it). I love the look of the pie crust of the Blueberry Tartlettes and I also loved the idea of adding salt to a pie crust with dates. In case you don't know, but I'm sure you do, dates taste like toffee. The darker they are the more like toffee they taste. And I like salted caramel flavour so I suspected I was going to like this.

Before I go on a bit more about the pie crust I should tell you straight out that this is the best recipe in the Healthy Sweet Treats section. Hands down. And it's vegan.



But back to the pie crust for a moment. The one in the tartlettes recipe isn't cooked, it's frozen and the pie filling is added just before serving, I think. Now I had already started mashing up the bananas before I discovered I didn't have all the ingredients for the Banana Apple Cake so I knew that whatever I was going to do would have to use the mashed bananas which seemed more suited to a warm pie so I changed the pie crust recipe so that it would hopefully bake. It does bake but you still need to press it into the pie tin with your fingers. This pie crust does not form into anything like a dough that you can roll out.

The original recipe calls for Kosher Salt. I'm sure you can get it in Dublin, just not sure where. I googled it and apparently Kosher Salt is salt that is used in the kosher process. It's has a larger flake than table salt but it didn't specify if it was sea salt or mined salt. I have one of those grinders full of large crystal sea salt. I prefer sea salt to other types because I think it tastes a little sweeter. In fact the only sort of salt I use is sea salt - which is said to be a foolish thing to do because it's slightly more expensive and apparently all salt tastes the same when cooked. As if I'm going to remember to buy a different type of salt though. I don't think it really matters what type of salt you use here but I'd definitely use the larger grain/flake salt.

I also add a pinch of pepper to banana mush. Again I just have one pepper that I use and it's a grinder full of different coloured pepper corns. Probably ground white pepper would be the best thing to use but I don't have it and I like the rainbow pepper mix. Use whatever type of pepper you like but if you are using freshly ground pepper like me, be aware that you'll have some large flakes of pepper in the filling. Personally I like getting a kick of pepper in a bite but not everyone might.

The salt and pepper are really what I love about this recipe so use what you like.



The first time I made this I used tinned pears. They were tinned in natural fruit juice and this is what I used for the apple & pear juice. The next time I made it I used fresh pears with the apple and pear juice. To be honest they both tasted great.

Another good thing about this recipe is that the pie is still good after 2 days in the fridge.

The way I make Banana Pear Pie is



The glaze on top is made with fruit juice, cornflour and spices. So in case you were thinking that it has a caramel taste, sorry to disappoint no it doesn't, but the pie crust does.

Ingredients

Serves 4 - 6

For pie crust

- 150g pitted dates
- hot water
- 150g whole almonds
- 3 tbsp sunflower oil
- 60g cornflour (corn starch)
- 1/2 tsp of sea salt - or to taste

For pie filling

- 3 large ripe bananas - 2 mashed, 1 sliced
- 3 pears, peeled cored & sliced
- 200ml pear & apple juice (or just apple or pear juice if handier)
- squeeze of lemon
- pinch of pepper
- pinch of nutmeg
- pinch of mild chili powder
- 1/2 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp grape juice (or port)
- cornflour & water

if you prepare everything before you begin cooking, sprinkle a little lemon juice over the sliced bananas and pears to stop them becoming discoloured.

Instructions

1. Put the dates in a cup/mug/small bowl and pour over about 100ml of boiling water, cover and leave to soften for 10 minutes.

2. When the dates have softened, put them and the water in a food processor. Add the almonds, oil, cornflour and salt and blend until the almonds and dates chopped small, and the mixture is clumping together a little. If the mixture is too wet to clump together, you either need to pulse it a few more times or add a little more cornflour.

3. When the mixture has reached the right consistency, grease your pie tin with some sunflower oil and then press the mixture into the tin with your fingers. Bake in an oven until fully cooked. *The oven here seems to decide for itself what temperature to cook at so I'm not going to even attempt to guess the correct temp or time - roughly (very roughly) a moderate oven for 30 - 40 min.*

4. Add the mashed banana and 100 ml of the apple and pear juice to a small saucepan on a moderate heat. Stir in the pepper, nutmeg, chili powder, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 teaspoon ground coriander and 1 tsp of vanilla extract. Stir around gently for about 5 minutes.

5. Blend 1 teaspoon of cornflour with 1 tablespoon of cold water and add to the banana mush mix. The mix will be already fairly solid before you add the cornflour but keep stirring till it becomes that bit more solid.

6. Spoon this mix on to the baked pie crust and arrange the banana and pear slices over this.

7. To a small saucepan add the 100ml of pear and apple juice, the 2 tablespoons of grape juice (or port), 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract, 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon and 1/4 teaspoon of ground coriander. Bring to the boil and let it reduce to about half the volume - it's not going to turn into a syrup but it will get a bit sweeter.

8. Blend a heaped teaspoon of cornflour with a little cold water, add the saucepan and stir around until the liquid had reached the required thickness. Pour this over the banana and pear slices.

9. Leave the pie for 20 - 30 minutes to set and it's ready to serve.