



Christmas Mince Pies by: YI JUN LOH

For those unfamiliar with the classic British Christmas dessert, mincemeat pies are little fabled tartlets the size of peanut butter cups, commonly filled with raisins, sultanas, cranberries, and other dried fruits, all macerated and cooked in heavily-spiced brandy or port. As their name suggests, mince pies traditionally did at one point have minced beef or lamb mixed in with the dried fruits. Some versions even used suet (beef fat) or lard to bind the filling together. Thankfully, most

modern iterations of mincemeat—the filling of mince pies—have done away with the “meat” part, opting instead for the agreeable boozy dried fruit filling that’s ubiquitous in England, especially around the holidays. —Yi Jun Loh

Prep Time 1-Hour, Cook Time 40 Minutes, Makes 2 Dozen Mini Pies

3 cups dried fruit (I use 50g, around 1/3 cup, each of dark raisins, golden raisins, currants, figs, apricots, cranberries, blueberries, mulberries, and cherries, but most combinations will work well)

25 grams candied ginger

1 apple, peeled and sliced into 1/2-inch cubes (Braeburn or Granny Smith work well)

1 orange, zested and juiced

1 cup (240ml) port (can be substituted with red wine)

1/2 stick (60g) butter

1/3 cup (70g) dark brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

1/2 teaspoon ground cloves

1/2 teaspoon ground allspice

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/2 salt

1/4 cup (60ml) brandy or cognac

Your favorite double pie dough recipe

1 egg, whisked together with one tablespoon water (for egg wash)

Directions

1. To make the mincemeat, chop up the larger dried fruits (like whole figs and apricots) into roughly 1/2-inch pieces. Transfer all the dried fruit into a pot, and add the candied ginger, apple, orange juice and zest, port, butter, sugar, salt, and all the spices. Bring this to a boil, then turn the heat down to a low simmer, and let it cook for 30 to 40 minutes, until nearly all the liquid has evaporated.
2. Then, add in the brandy or cognac, and let cool to room temperature before transferring to an airtight jar or container. (The mincemeat keeps well for up to a month in the refrigerator. I like keeping them for at least a week before using it, as the flavor will deepen and develop a bit more, but it works fresh too!)
3. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C), and ready a mini muffin tin or individual tartlet moulds (molds) to bake the mince pies in.
4. Take the pie dough out of the refrigerator and roll it out until 1/8-inch (3-4mm) thick. Cut out 20-25 little discs of dough with a 3-inch ring cookie cutter (fluted if possible) and nestle each disc into the muffin tin or tartlet moulds (molds). Then, dollop a tablespoon of mincemeat into each pie. (If your work surface isn't quite big enough to punch out 20-25 dough discs, you can split the initial dough in half and work in batches.)
5. Using a star-shaped cookie cutter, punch little stars out of the dough, gathering and re-rolling it out as needed. Place these dough stars on top of the mince pies and brush a thin layer of egg wash on top.
6. Bake the mince pies in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the tops are golden. When they're done, remove from the moulds and let them cool down on a wire rack until warm to touch. Repeat the baking process until all your mince pies are baked.
7. Dust a flurry of icing sugar on top of the mince pies and serve on a large cookie platter. (They keep well for up to a week in an airtight container. If you're saving them for later, pop them into the oven for 5 minutes to warm up right before serving.)