THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS · DECEMBER 25 TO JANUARY 5

Mini mince pies for the Twelve Days of Christmas

Prep 35 min **Cook** 35 min **Cool** 20 min **Total** 1 hr 30 min **Makes** 12 mini pies **Level** Easy

ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED

Cooking is for children and grown-ups together. An adult should supervise at all times and handle the oven, stovetop, knives, and anything hot. Hot fruit filling and its sugar syrup burn badly. A grown-up does the stovetop work and handles the hot tin, and the pies cool 10 minutes before anyone lifts them out. Whole raisins and currants can be a choking hazard for children under 4, so chop the fruit finely for toddlers.

ALLERGY INFORMATION

Contains wheat (gluten) and milk. Store-bought pie crusts vary: some contain milk, egg, soy, or lard, so check the label. Jarred mincemeat can contain suet (beef fat), tree nuts such as almonds, or alcohol, so read the jar, or make the quick fruit mincemeat here. Always read ingredient labels, since brands vary, and ask about food allergies before you cook or share.

INGREDIENTS

Quick fruit mincemeat (or one 14 oz / 400 g jar)

- 1 large tart apple, such as Granny Smith, peeled and finely chopped
- ½ cup (75 g) raisins
- ½ cup (75 g) currants, or more raisins
- ⅓ cup (70 g) packed dark brown sugar
- 2 tbsp (30 g) butter
- Finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp each ground nutmeg, cloves, and ginger

Pastry

- 2 refrigerated pie crusts (one 14 oz / 400 g box), or homemade pastry for a double-crust pie
- 1 tbsp milk, for brushing
- Powdered sugar, for dusting

METHOD

1. Put all the mincemeat ingredients in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Simmer, stirring often, for 10 to 15 minutes, until the apple is soft and the juices are thick and syrupy. Spread it on a plate to cool completely. (Skip this step if you use a jar.)
2. Heat the oven to 400°F (200°C) and grease a 12-cup muffin tin.
3. Unroll the pie crusts on a lightly floured counter. Cut 12 circles with a 3½-inch (9 cm) round cutter or the rim of a glass, and press them gently into the muffin cups.
4. Press the scraps together, roll them out, and cut 12 stars with a 2-inch (5 cm) star cutter.
5. Spoon about 1 heaping tablespoon of mincemeat into each pastry case. Do not overfill, or it bubbles over. Lay a star on top and brush the stars with milk.
6. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, until the pastry is golden brown and the filling bubbles.
7. Cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then run a butter knife around each pie and lift it out onto a rack. Dust with powdered sugar like snow, and serve warm or cool.

LITTLE HELPERS CAN (WITH A GROWN-UP)

- Measure the raisins and currants
- Cut out the pastry stars
- Spoon the cooled mincemeat into the cases
- Dust the pies with powdered sugar “snow”

GOOD TO KNOW

- Make the mincemeat up to 1 week ahead and keep it covered in the fridge, so baking day is quick.
- Mince pies keep for 3 days in an airtight tin, or freeze them for up to 1 month. Warm them for 10 minutes in a 300°F (150°C) oven.

A BLESSING BEFORE WE EAT

Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen. Holy Child of Bethlehem, fill all twelve days of Christmas, and every month of the year ahead, with your joy.