

Gingered Carrot Pie

1 pie crust, chilled

Stewed Carrots:

1½ lb. carrots

2 oranges

3 T fresh, grated ginger (about a 4" piece of fresh ginger set aside 1T to be added with the custard ingredients)

1½ c. water

2 T. butter

1 small cinnamon stick

½ t. salt

Custard:

¾ c. milk

⅓ c. cream or crème fraiche

⅓- ⅔c. dark brown sugar¹

2 whole eggs and 1 egg yolk

Equipment:

rolling pin

dough scraper

coffee filters

dried beans or pie weights

Aluminum foil

Parbake Crust²:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Take a large paper coffee filter (or several small filters) and completely line the inside of the pie dough. Fill the pie with dried beans or weights. Bake crust with weights for 20 minutes. As soon as the beans have cooled enough to handle them, remove the beans and the coffee filters. The dough underneath will still look moist. Return the crust to the oven for another 10-15 minutes. The crust will puff up. Immediately after you have removed the crust from the oven, press down on the crust bubbles with the

¹I offer such a wide variation of sugar content because both carrots and oranges have a hugely variable sweetness.

²With custard based crusts, I like to parbake them first-- this means filling the pie crust with beans or other weights to keep the dough in place and partly baking the crust. Beans that you have used as weights won't be good for cooking, but you can reuse the beans as pie crust weights for quite some time. The purpose of parbaking is to give the crust a jump start on cooking, and also allows it to give off a little of its moisture before adding a wet filling. With a parbaked crust, you need to be even more careful than usual about over cooking the edge of the crust, that's why I call for making a little crust shield for this pie.

bottom of a measuring cup.

Prep Produce:

Peel carrots and cut into 2" lengths. If they are very wide (over an inch) cut the thickest pieces in half lengthwise. Grate ginger. Zest and juice the oranges.

Stew Carrots:

Place the orange juice and zest in a stock pot or dutch oven along with the rest of the ingredients for stewed carrots. (Set aside 1 T. of the grated ginger to be added after the carrots have stewed.) Place the pot over high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20- 30minutes, stirring occasionally. Pay more attention to the carrots as they are nearly done. You want to cook down the cooking liquid to almost nothing, but if you overdo it you could burn the carrots. Test carrots to make sure that they are tender all the way through. If they need to cook longer, but you are out of liquid add a little more water and continue cooking until they are tender. Remove cooked carrots with a slotted spoon or tongs and place in a blender. If the leftover cooking liquid is more than ¼c, boil it down until you have ¼ c. or less. Discard cinnamon stick

Blend & Season:

Add the cooking liquid from the carrots to the blender. Add milk, cream and ⅓ c. brown sugar to the blender. Blend on high speed for a full minute, scraping down the sides of the blender if necessary. The puree should be very smooth. Taste the carrot puree and add more sugar in a tablespoon at a time, until you reach the desired sweetness. Add eggs and yolks to the blender. Blend to mix.

Bake:

Pour filling into parbaked crust. Cut three 2" strips of aluminum foil. Crimp and bend the foil so that it will sit on top of the crust-- this will help to keep your crust edge from over-browning. Place in a 350°F oven and bake for 55- 65 minutes, turning once. The top of the filling will crack and the whole filling will puff up slightly. Transfer pie plate to a rack to cool. Allow to cool completely before serving

Serve:

Because this pie isn't loaded with sugar, it should be refrigerated if kept for more than a day. But the flavor is best if you bring it up to room temperature before serving. A slice of this pie is lovely with brandy-soaked raisins and a dollop of crème fraiche.