

## SWEET AS PIE

By Naomi Tomky

» Few desserts occupy such a celebrated spot on the table as the Thanksgiving pie. Baking instructor and author of *Art of the Pie*, Kate McDermott, reassures nervous cooks: “If you are most comfortable buying pie dough, do it. Nobody is going to refuse to eat it.” And if you do roll your own, don’t overthink it—or overwork the dough. And “stop before you think you’re done, and don’t forget to turn on the oven,” she says.

When it comes to the crust—what gives most new bakers the willies—she reminds us to keep everything as cold as possible: the butter, the flour, even our hands (“hold ice cubes” before handling the dough, she suggests).

Rachael Coyle, owner of Seattle’s Coyle’s Bakeshop, takes keeping things cold one step further, suggesting that home cooks look to the practices of a commercial kitchen. For instance, she and her team make everything ahead of time and freeze it. She says you can roll your dough into an aluminum pie pan, wrap it with cellophane and freeze it (stacked, if you’re making more than one) up to two weeks

### CRAFTING CRANBERRY PIE

“People don’t do it too often, but it’s a nice fall-time, going-into-the-winter alternative to sour-cherry pie,” says Kate McDermott, a baking instructor and cookbook author. “[Cranberry pie] has that same ‘wow factor,’ and it’s really pretty. It doesn’t take too many ingredients at all: cranberries, sugar, maybe a little Cointreau, a tiny bit of salt, a squeeze of lemon, and cornstarch to thicken it—just a couple teaspoons because there is so much natural pectin in cranberries.”

Find the recipe in McDermott’s *Art of the Pie: A Practical Guide to Home-made Crusts, Fillings, and Life* (2016, W.W. Norton/The Countryman Press).



Kate McDermott's cranberry pie.

ahead to buy yourself time in the kitchen on the day of.

Options for filling a pie stoke endless enthusiasm in both Coyle and McDermott. Coyle keeps her pies fairly traditional, with minor tweaks: adding a bit of dark chocolate to cut the sweetness of pecan, using fresh winter luxury pie pumpkins to make her own filling and adding pear to her apple pie filling for better texture (she also suggests adding herbs such as thyme). McDermott gets a bit more playful, crossing courses of the meal with her

cranberry pie and replacing evaporated milk in her pumpkin filling with light coconut milk.

McDermott also has a few last-minute reminders: “Put [the filled pie pan] on a preheated sheet pan to avoid a soggy bottom,” she says, and fill a fruit pie only up to about a half-inch below the rim to keep it from bubbling over. But most importantly, she returns to her initial advice about people’s willingness to eat dessert in almost any form: “If things go wrong, turn it into a lasagna pan, and you’ll have an amazing crumble.” ❧