

# Cozy in a Crust Homity Pie

Baker: Margaret Mae

Homity pie is a historical classic, and was a favorite of the Women's Land Army on the UK Homefront during World War 2. It's comforting and delicious, especially on a cold day when you're ready to get cozy with a hearty slice of savory pie!

## Ingredients

### Thyme-infused Butter

- 2 sticks butter
- 3 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 1 TBSP water

### Pie Dough

- 200 g all-purpose flour, divided. 150 g for pie dough, 50 for roux
- 1 TBSP sugar
- 1/2 tsp kosher salt; for table salt, use same weight or half as much by volume
- 2 sticks of butter (thyme-infused butter, if using), divided. 4.5 ounces unsalted butter for pie dough, cold and cut into ¼ cubes, plus roughly 1 TBSP for cooking the leeks and onions and 1-2 TBSP for roux
- 0.5 ounce Cheddar cheese, grated from fresh (optional, see note)
- 3 TBSP (1.5 ounces) cold water

### Filling

- 2 lbs of waxy potatoes, peeled, cubed, and cooked (boiled, baked, or even leftovers)
- 1 large leek, thoroughly cleaned and sliced into ¼ inch half-moons
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 tsp fresh thyme, divided
- 1 large glove of garlic, minced
- heavy cream, ¼ cup
- 2 tsp salt, divided
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 4-5oz Cheddar cheese, grated from fresh (see note)
- 1 egg
- Half a sliced tomato (optional)

### Thyme-Infused Butter

1. **Prep:** Prepare an ice bath with cool water and a few ice cubes in a large bowl, and another mixing bowl to set inside it. A steel mixing bowl is perfect.
2. **Melt Butter:** In a stainless steel (or other light-colored pan), melt 2 sticks of American-style butter over medium heat. Add 3 sprigs of thyme.

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3. **Brown Butter:** Swirl butter with a rubber spatula, watching closely as foam builds and then subsides. When butter solids at the bottom of the pan begin to turn a caramel color, turn off the heat and continue to swirl as the butter darkens.
4. **Whisk with Water:** After cooking the butter loses all water content, which you must add back in. Carefully strain the liquid butter to remove the thyme, pouring the browned butter into your mixing bowl. Add water. It will bubble dramatically, so take care! Place over ice bath being careful not to spill any ice water into the butter, and whisk until the butter cools to the consistency of cake frosting.
5. **Cool completely:** Transfer the whipped brown butter to an airtight container and chill in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or overnight. Reserve the thyme leaves from the butter infusion and refrigerate to use as a topping on the finished pie.

## Cheesy Crust

1. **Combine Butter & Flour:** Combine 100g of flour with ½ tsp kosher salt and 1 TBSP of sugar in the bowl of a food processor, pulse to combine. Sprinkle cubed cold butter and 0.5 ounces of freshly grated cheese evenly across the bowl, and pulse to combine until large clumps form and no dry flour remains.
2. **Add remaining flour:** Add remaining 50 g of flour and pulse until the clumps are broken up, 5-7 times.
3. **Bring Dough Together:** Pour dough into a large bowl. Sprinkle with a little of the cold water at a time, and use a rubber/silicone spatula to fold the dough in on itself. Continue until a smooth dough forms.
4. **Rest Dough:** Shape dough into a ball, slightly shape into a disk, wrap in cling film and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, up to overnight.
5. **Roll and Shape:** After at least 2 hours rest in the fridge, roll your pie dough out to a large rough circle a little bigger than your pie pan, and roughly ¼ of an inch thick. Gently ease into a greased pie pan, and chill again for at least 2 hours. (you can flute the edges at this time, if desired)
6. **Shape Dough for Bottom Crust:** Roll rested dough on a well-floured surface into a 14" circle. Drape dough gently into a pie tin, lifting the edges to ease it in and pressing it into the corners gently.
7. **Rest Dough Again:** Let rolled and shaped dough in pan for at least 30 minutes.

## Filling

1. **Prepare Potatoes:** Cook potatoes in your preferred method, boiling or baking are both fine. Allow them to cool completely and ensure they are fully peeled and cut into roughly ½ inch cubes.
2. **Prepare Leeks and Onions:** Heat a deep pan or Dutch oven and add in 1 TBSP butter. Add leeks, onions, and 1 tsp fresh thyme, toss to combine. Let cook, stirring regularly, for 10-12 minutes, adding minced garlic in the last 2 minutes, until the vegetables are well softened and translucent. Remove from pan and set aside.
3. **Prepare Roux:** Melt 1 TBSP of butter in the same pan you've just used. Once fully melted, sprinkle in flour a little at a time, whisking thoroughly to combine. If the mixture is very runny, add a little

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more flour until it becomes a paste a little thicker than cake batter. Let cook over low to medium heat for 3-4 minutes, stirring constantly. When roux turns a light golden color and begins to smell nutty, remove pan from heat and add in cream, stirring carefully and vigorously to combine. Continue stirring for up to a minute while roux thickens. Optional: add 1 tsp fresh thyme.

4. **Combine and Let Cool:** Combine your filling ingredients, add salt and pepper, and season to taste. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours, up to overnight.

## Assemble

1. **Make Egg Wash:** In a small bowl, scramble an egg with a pinch of salt for egg wash. Slice tomato pieces if using, sprinkle with a pinch of salt, and lay out on a cooling or drying rack. Let both the wash and tomato slice stand while assembling the pie
2. **Prepare Pie Shell:** Brush egg wash over bottom inside of pie shell, sprinkle with a pinch of thyme and cheese, saving the majority of cheese for the topping.
3. **Fill Pie Shell:** Add 1/3 of pie filling into the pie shell. Sprinkle with cheese and thyme. Repeat. Finish with a layer of the last of the filling.
4. **Add Topping and Rest:** Cover filling thoroughly with the remaining cheese. (you can flute the edges at this time, if desired) Let rest assembled pie chill for at least 30 minutes.

## Bake

5. **Preheat:** Preheat your oven to 375 °F and adjust the rack to the upper-middle position.
6. Brush crust edges (not the cheese!) with rested egg wash. Spread sliced tomato in an attractive pattern, leaving plenty of exposed cheese to brown in the oven.
7. Then, bake at 375 for 40-45 minutes, but begin checking it every 5 min after 30 minutes in the oven.
8. **Bake:** Place your pie on a rimmed sheet pan and bake at 375 °F for 30-45 minutes, checking every 5 minutes after 30 minutes of baking. Pie is ready when the cheese topping has melted and begun to brown.
9. **Enjoy:** Let cool for 10 minutes, sprinkle with fried thyme leaves, and enjoy!

## Notes:

- Cheese in the crust adds extra flavor, and a light crumbly texture.
- For an even crumblier crust that blends into the filling, use less water when making the dough.
- If your leeks and onions let off a great deal of liquid, scoop the vegetables out of the pan and allow the liquid to reduce to a lower volume and thicker consistency. There's lots of flavor in that liquid, and thickening it before tossing the cooked leeks and onions back in will improve the texture.
- Milk can be used instead of heavy cream in the roux, just be prepared to stir and let it thicken a little longer.

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## Oak Park Farmers' Market Vendor Ingredients

- All Purpose Flour: **Brian Severson Farms**
- Tomato Topping: **Skibbe Farms**
- Potatoes: **The Farm Plainfield/Oswego, IL**
- Fresh Thyme: **Geneva Lakes Produce**
- Cheddar Cheese: **J2K Capraio**
- Leeks: **Nichols Farm & Orchard**