## Salt and Serenity

**Apple Cider Caramel Slab Pie with Oat and Almond Crisp Topping**

Serves 8-10

The filling recipe for this pie was created by the pie queen Erin Jeanne McDowell. She literally wrote The Book on Pie. She had the brilliant idea to reduce apple cider to a caramel-like consistency. It creates the most intense apple flavoured pie you will ever eat.

This is my adaptation of Erin’s pie. I made it into a slab pie, baking it in a quarter sheet pan (9x13”) and topped it with an oat and almond crisp topping.

**Pie Dough:**

270 grams all-purpose flour

⅛ teaspoon cinnamon

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

1 teaspoon kosher salt

¼ teaspoon baking powder

170 grams (1½ sticks) cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes

2 teaspoons cider vinegar

4-5 Tablespoons cold water

**Cider Caramel:**

4 cups apple cider

28 grams unsalted butter

½ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt

½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract

**Crisp Topping:**

280 grams all-purpose flour

320 grams light brown sugar

112 grams rolled oats (do not use instant or quick cook, I like Quaker “Old Fashioned”)

112 grams roasted salted almonds

340 grams chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1-inch chunks

**Apple Filling:**

1.36 kilograms (about 6-8 large) Honeycrisp apples (or another good baking apple), peeled and thinly sliced into ¼-inch slices

212 grams packed light brown sugar

40 grams all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. **Make the dough:** In the bowl of a food processor, mix the flour, cinnamon, sugar, salt, and baking powder. Add the butter and pulse until pea-size nuggets of butter remain. Add the vinegar and water, and pulse until dough is just holding together. Start with 4 Tablespoons water and add additional if needed. DO NOT continue processing until dough comes together in a ball.
2. Dump dough onto the counter and gently knead it together. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes. Remove dough from fridge, lightly flour counter and roll dough out into a 12x16 inch rectangle, about ⅛ inch thick. Place the pastry onto the bottom of an ungreased 9x13 1-inch-deep baking pan, pressing firmly against bottom and sides. Fold the overhang back over, so that the edges are double thickness and pinch it to make a nice, compact edge. Decoratively flute edges of the dough. Chill crust while making the cider caramel.
3. **Make Cider Caramel:** In a large, wide heavy-duty pot (I used my 5-quart Le Creuset for this), bring the apple cider to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue cooking, without stirring, until the cider reduces to a sauce with the consistency of thin caramel. This will take 20-25 minutes, depending on the size of your pot. Check the progress every 15 minutes at the start, and then more frequently once it starts to thicken.
4. Add butter, salt and vanilla to the caramel and then pour it into a heatproof bowl to cool slightly, about 30 minutes. You can make the caramel ahead of time, but because of the high amount of pectin in apples, the caramel sauce will become jelly-like at room temperature. You will just need to warm it in the microwave in 15 second bursts, until it becomes fluid again. It shouldn’t be hot when you add it to the apples, a little bit warm is fine.
5. **Make Crisp Topping:** Place topping ingredients (flour, brown sugar, almonds, oats and butter) in the bowl of the food processor and pulse machine on and off until mixture is crumbly, about 10 times. Set crisp topping aside.
6. **Make Apple Filling**: Place sliced apples in a large bowl. Add brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, and cooled cider caramel. Use your hands to gently mix until the apples are thoroughly coated.
7. Preheat oven 425°F. Remove crust from fridge. Pour apples into crust. Use your hands to spread the apples out. Cover the apples with the crisp topping, squeezing small handfuls of the topping together to create clumps. Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 375°F, cover crisp with foil and bake for an additional 40-45 minutes until crust is golden and apples are tender, and crisp is bubbling. Serve warm or at room temperature.