

Seasonal Eating
Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent

Thanksgiving Tarts
November 2016

Thanksgiving is such a beautiful holiday. A time to reflect on all that we enjoy and have in our lives, whether it is family, health, freedom, wealth, friends, faith, security, work, shelter, food or just the sunshine and breath for the day.

And, of course, there is the glorious spread of food to enjoy with all of the fall holiday flavors – cranberry, pumpkin, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, sweet potato, ginger, apple and so on. Full of traditions and favorites, we enjoy the feast.

This is also the time when pie reigns supreme, but being so full of turkey and dressing, a big slice of mile high apple pie just might send us over the edge. One of the trends today is making a tart instead of pie. Tarts are the daintier cousin of the pie and make a perfect sweet ending to a big meal. The good news is that they can be made in all of those traditional flavors, just in a thinner, open faced version that can be cut into narrow wedges - or if you're eating it later that night - a big wedge! Pumpkin, pecan, apple streusel and cranberry all work well in tart form.

One essential for making a tart is a removable bottom tart pan. It is basically a fluted ring that a flat disk fits into to create a shallow round pan. After it bakes and cools, the bottom pushes up to remove the ring. If you need to remove it from the bottom, line the bottom with parchment paper and you can slide the tart right off and reuse your pan for another tart. The pans come in 9" – 11" diameters and look for one that has a side at least 1" deep. We have three 9 ½" x 1" shiny metal pans for classes and they work beautifully.

You can press a crumb crust into the bottom and sides or line it with a rolled pie crust. After easing the crust into the pan, cut the excess dough off even with the top of the pan (usually you can just press down on the top and the edge of the pan will cut off the dough). Also make sure that you roll your pie crust to about 1/8" thickness so you don't end up with too much crust to filling.

Below is a recipe for a tart filled with walnuts and chopped dates – a great holiday combination. Be sure to toast your nuts before adding to your tart.

So let's give thanks and celebrate with friends and family this holiday season! For more seasonal eating recipes and information check out the Bedford County Extension website (bedford.tennessee.edu).



Date Nut Tart

1 1/2 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup vegetable shortening
4-5 tablespoons cold water
1 1/2 cups coarsely chopped toasted walnuts
1 cup pitted dates, chopped
2/3 cup dark corn syrup
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 eggs

In a medium bowl, stir together flour and salt. Cut in shortening. Add cold water around edge of bowl and stir together with a fork until it comes together in a ball. Turn out onto a floured counter and roll out to about 1/8" thick. Place in 9" tart pan, easing into bottom and up sides. Trim off excess dough. Sprinkle nuts and dates into pie shell. In a medium bowl, whisk together corn syrup, sugar, vanilla, salt and eggs. Gently pour over nuts and dates. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes or until puffed and browned. Cool in pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes and then release ring and let finish cooling.