

Impressive Lemon Meringue Pie

Light and airy toasted meringue topping, silky smooth and creamy tart lemon filling, buttery, flaky crust – who can resist a slice of lemon meringue pie? This pie is a lemon lover's dream come true! A perfect balance of sweetness, tang, and texture in each bite.

Baking a fabulous lemon meringue pie at home is simple with just a few tips! A few common issues prevent you from having the best experience with lemon meringue pie, and I will address them. Once you master the skills, this pie will be a favorite dessert.

Crust

You can use a homemade or store-bought crust. However, I highly suggest making a crust.

Chilled or frozen real butter and ice-cold water are the keys to flaky, tender pastry.

Using a food processor makes quick and easy work of homemade pastry. Once most bakers try it, they never return to making pie dough by hand.

A moisture barrier can be created to prevent a soggy crust by brushing the unbaked crust with egg white or beaten egg mixed with water.

Prebake the pie shell until it is golden brown and crisp.

Filling

Separate the eggs while they are cold to minimize yolk breakage. The tiniest bit of fat or egg yolk will ruin a meringue, as fat interferes with forming good foam.

Before the lemons are grated for zest, they should be washed.

Use fresh lemon juice and zest. If you use bottled juice or dried lemon zest, you may be disappointed with your pie.

Ensure all the lemon filling ingredients are prepped before starting the recipe. The filling is time-sensitive, so having pre-measured ingredients is essential.

Cook the filling gently and slowly to avoid curdling. Also, follow the cooking times to ensure that it will set firmly enough that you can slice it. Not cooking the filling long enough will mean it will not set up and be soupy. Cooking too long can break the filling, causing it to separate and make a watery pool underneath.

Stir the filling occasionally while making the meringue to prevent a skin from forming as it cools. The filling must still be hot when the meringue goes on top. Adding the meringue to a hot filling cooks the meringue from the bottom and helps bond the two layers.

Meringue

There are three types of meringues. French meringue is baked. Swiss and Italian meringues are cooked.

Use fresh, room temperature egg whites because they whip best. They will foam better than cold egg whites and form a more stable meringue.

When using superfine sugar, it will quickly dissolve. Make sure to add the sugar after soft peaks are formed.

Once the meringue is shiny, stop mixing and check for the peaks to hold their shape. If they do, stop mixing.

Before adding the meringue, cover the filled pie with parchment paper and lightly press to make sure that it touches the lemon filling. Once you are ready to top the pie, remove the paper, creating a rough surface. The meringue will bond with the textured surface as the pie cools. This prevents the meringue from sliding off the pie when it is sliced.

Make sure to top the pie with the meringue while the filling is still warm. Spread the meringue to touch the pie crust and seal the filling underneath. If there are gaps, the meringue will shrink and pull away from the crust as it bakes and cools.

It is imperative that once you have baked the meringue, you let the pie cool completely before slicing it.

Lemon meringue pie is always best served the same day it is made. So it is the ideal dessert to make in the morning and eat that evening.

If there is leftover pie, it must be refrigerated. The meringue will start to deteriorate, but if the pie is not left at room temperature for more than two hours, the pie can be eaten for up to 3 days.

It is impossible to resist a delicious homemade pie crust, tart and smooth lemon filling, and a fluffy toasted meringue topping. Redeem all of your past lemon meringue disasters by making one that works.

(Sources: dishupdelish.com; finecooking.com; food52.com; www.savoryexperiments.com)