

## ELSIE'S LEMON MERINGUE PIE



**PREP TIME**

30 Minutes



**BAKE TIME**

15 Minutes



**SERVES**

8-10



### Ingredients

#### Graham Cracker Crust:

- 1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs (from about 12 crackers)
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted

#### Lemon Filling:

- 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup + 2 tbsp cornstarch
- 1/4 tsp table salt
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 5 large egg yolks
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter (2 oz), cut into 4 pieces and softened
- 1 1/2 tbsp finely grated and minced lemon zest + 1/3 cup strained lemon juice (all from

### Method

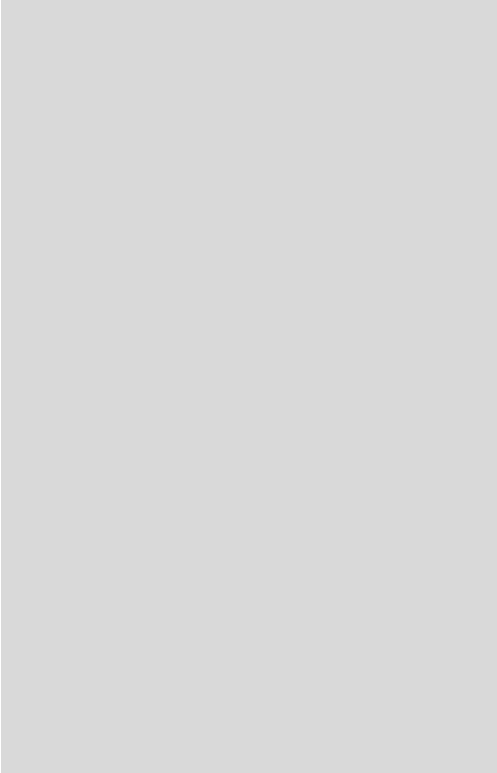
- **Graham Cracker Crust:** Preheat oven to 375 F and set the oven rack in the middle position.
- In a medium bowl, mix together the graham cracker crumbs and sugar. Add the melted butter, stir with a fork first, then your hands until the mixture is well combined. Pour the mixture into a 9 x 1 1/2-inch glass pie plate. Use the flat bottom of a drinking glass or measuring cup, press the crumbs firmly onto the bottom and up the sides of the pie plate. The crust should be about 1/4-inch thick. Let the crust sit on a wire rack while you while you prepare the filling.
- Bake for about 8 minutes in preheated oven, until just slightly browned. Reduce oven temperature to 325 F.
- **Filling:** In a heavy-bottom 3-quart saucepan, whisk together the sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Whisk in 1/4 cup cold water until the mixture is smooth. Then whisk in another 1-1/4 cups cold water until combined. Cook over medium to medium-low heat, stirring occasionally at first with a heatproof spatula, then continuously as the mixture comes to a boil (you will see a few large bubbles pop), turns glossy, and thickens into a semi-translucent gel, 4 to 6 minutes. Whisk briefly to smooth out the mixture; then reduce the heat to low and cook 1 minute more, gently pulling the mixture from the sides to the center with the spatula to prevent scorching. Remove the pot from the heat.

about 3 medium lemons)

*Meringue:*

- 5 large egg whites, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup superfine sugar
- 3/4 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp cream of tartar

- In a medium bowl, lightly whisk the egg yolks. Gently whisk about 1/2 cup of the gel into the egg yolks; repeat with another 1/2 cup gel. Pour the yolk mixture into the pot and gently whisk to combine. Over low to medium-low heat, cook the filling, gently pulling it from the sides to the centre with the spatula, until it begins to boil (you will see a few large bubbles pop), 4 to 6 minutes. Continue to cook, stirring as before, until the mixture thickens further (don't worry if it clumps at this point), about 1 minute more. Remove the pot from the heat and dot the filling with the butter, pushing it under the surface; let stand for a minute to melt. Gently whisk in the lemon juice and zest until smooth.
- Pour the filling into the pie crust and smooth it out with a spoon. Let it cool to room temperature. Do not put it into the refrigerator (see notes below)
- **Meringue:** Bring 1/2 inch of water to a simmer in a pot that will hold the bowl of a stand mixer without letting it touch the water. Reduce the heat to low. Put the egg whites in the bowl off the heat and whisk (preferably with a balloon whisk) until frothy.
- Put the bowl over the pot and whisk gently but constantly (you are not trying to incorporate air, but to keep the whites moving so they don't cook) until the whites are very warm to the touch (they will register 115°F to 120°F on an instant-read thermometer) and the sugar is thoroughly dissolved (lift a ribbon of whites from the bowl with the whisk and rub the whites between your fingertips—you should feel no grit), 2 to 4 minutes. (Heating the egg whites and sugar helps to stabilize the meringue so it doesn't weep once cooked).
- Add the vanilla and cream of tartar, transfer the bowl to the stand mixer, fit with the whisk attachment, and beat, gradually increasing the speed from low to medium high over the course of 1 minute, until the egg whites form thick, glossy medium-firm peaks (they should hold their shape but curl at their tips), 3 to 5 minutes total.
- Using a soup spoon, drop some of the meringue in mounds in a ring around the edge of the filling. With the back of the spoon, gently spread the dollops of meringue over the entire surface of the filling and all the way to the crust's edge. It is essential that all of the



filling be completely covered by the meringue, without any air pockets, and that the edge of the meringue be anchored to the rim of the crust. Mound the remaining meringue on top and press with the back of the spoon to eliminate any air pockets without deflating the meringue. Make decorative peaks with the back of the spoon.

- Bake the pie until the meringue peaks brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Cool the pie on a rack away from drafts to prevent the meringue from shrinking. Let stand at least 1 hour before serving. To slice, rinse a sharp, thin-bladed knife in hot water and shake off the excess before making each cut. Lemon meringue pie is best eaten the day it's made, but leftovers will keep, loosely tented with aluminum foil and refrigerated, for up to 3 days. Never cover with plastic wrap—too much condensation will form under the wrapping. Do not freeze.