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EC9994 Easy as Pie

Ethel Diedrichsen

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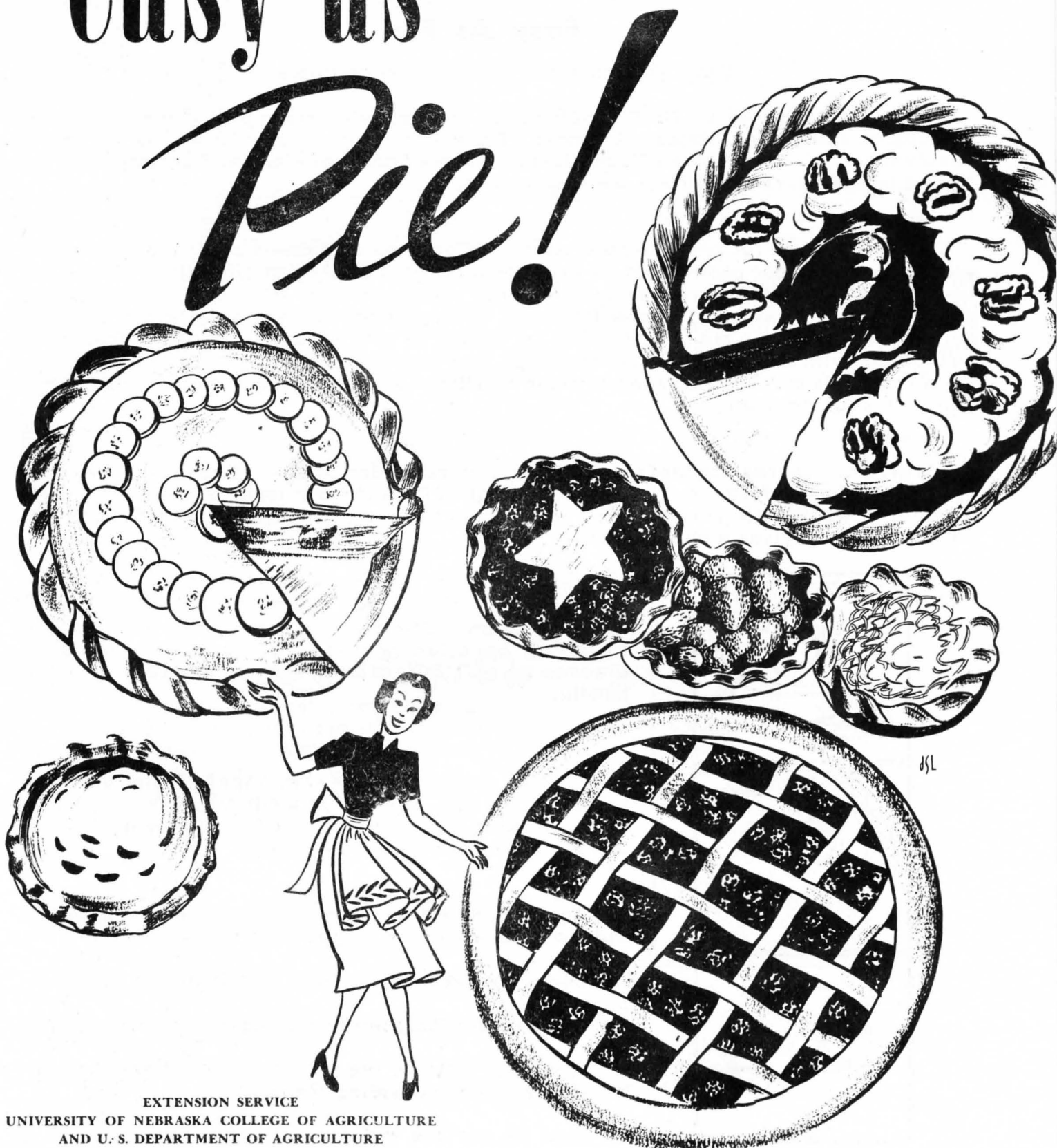
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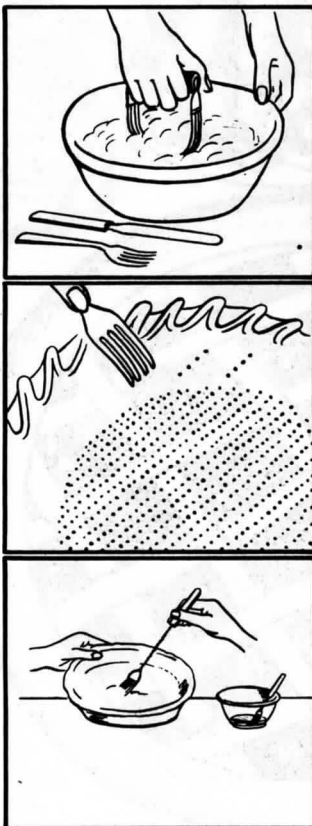
Easy As Pie!

Ethel Diedrichsen, Extension Nutritionist

Big, deep fruit pies, fluffy chiffon pies and delicate cream pies are all favorites throughout the United States. A tender, flaky crust, beautifully brown, is the key to pastry success. The choice of ingredients, the method of mixing and handling, and the baking temperature also affect the final result.

Many kinds of fat produce good pastry. Corn and cottonseed oils, and chicken fat make the most tender pastry, but the crust is usually crumbly and difficult to handle unless special precautions are taken. Among the plastic or solid fats, lard has the greatest shortening power. The new improved hydrogenated fats are easy to use and yield very tender, flaky pie crusts. The fat should be cold enough to measure accurately and to blend with the flour. Home rendered lard should be chilled before using. Chilling of other fats may be necessary in warm weather, but usually fat at room temperature will give good results.

In general, increasing the fat results in a more tender pastry. Increasing the water decreases the tenderness. Too much mixing of fat and flour tends to give a crumbly, less-flaky pastry. All-purpose flour made from hard wheat tends to give a flaky crust. Soft wheat flour gives a crumbly crust.



Fat may be cut into the flour with a fork or a pastry blender, or with knives. You may also blend it lightly with the fingers. The dough may be rolled as soon as it is mixed, but allowing it to stand for a few minutes increases the elasticity of the dough and makes it easier to handle.

You can avoid excessive shrinkage by fitting the dough loosely in the pan. Rerolling tends to cause shrinkage. Close pricking with a fork will prevent blistering or puffing when the pastry shell is baked.

You can protect the lower crust in fruit pies by following one or more of the suggestions below:

Use a hot oven for the first 10 minutes of baking.

Thicken the filling before placing in pastry-lined pans.

Spread a little of the dry sugar and flour over the bottom crust before adding the fruit.

Coat the surface with melted butter or oil.

Plain Pastry

SINGLE CRUST

1 cup sifted
all-purpose flour
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 to 1/3 cup shortening*
2 1/2 tablespoons cold water

DOUBLE CRUST

1 1/2 cups sifted
all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
3/8 to 1/2 cup shortening*
4 tablespoons cold water

PASTRY MIX

7 cups sifted
all-purpose flour
4 teaspoons salt
1 pound (2 cups)
shortening

*The smaller amount of shortening is preferred when home rendered lard is used.

Regular Method - Mix flour and salt. Add shortening and blend with pastry blender or fork until mixture looks like coarse meal. Sprinkle water over the surface and toss quickly with a fork until mixture sticks together. Form pastry into smooth ball.

Easy Method - Mix flour and salt. Blend shortening with an equal amount of flour with a spoon until no dry particles of flour remain in the bottom of the bowl (1 to 2 minutes). Add the rest of the flour-salt mixture and cut it in with the edge of the spoon until the flour-fat particles stop getting smaller and start getting larger (1 to 2 minutes). Add water all at once and stir just until a ball of dough is formed and the bowl is clean.

Pastry Mix - Use either method for mixing the flour, salt and shortening, and store in covered jar until needed. Keep jar in the refrigerator if home rendered lard is used. For a one-crust pie, use 1 1/4 cups of the mix and 3 tablespoons water. For a two-crust pie, use 2 1/4 cups of the mix with 1/3 cup water.

Place ball of dough on lightly floured board or pastry canvas and roll in a circle 1 inch larger than the pan on all sides. Transfer dough to a pie plate and finish in one of the following ways:

Single-Crust Pies - Trim off surplus pastry, leaving 1/2 inch all around. Fold the edge under and crimp it, pressing it firmly against the rim of the pan. For a pie shell, prick the bottom and sides with a fork at least every 1/2 inch to prevent blisters. Bake shell at 450° for about 12 to 15 minutes. For a custard-type pie, pour the filling into an unbaked crust, and bake the pie according to the directions for the filling.

Double-Crust Pies - Fill the pie with the prepared filling. Moisten the edge of the lower crust with water. Cut several slashes in the top crust to allow escape of steam. Put the top crust in place leaving 1/2 inch beyond edge of pan. Fold top edge under lower edge. Press together and flute the edges. A lattice top made by weaving strips of pastry together may be used in place of top crust. Bake the pie according to directions for the filling, usually 450° for about 10 minutes and then at reduced heat, about 350°, until the filling is done.



Edgings



1. Diagonal flute: Place forefingers $1/4$ inch apart in diagonal position, then push right forefinger gently toward left to make rounded flute. Repeat each $1/2$ inch around edge.

2. Pinch flute: Use forefingers and thumb to make pie crust point on outer edge, pushing center outward with right forefinger. Repeat in half-inch spaces. Sharpen points by pinching.

3. Leaf: Snip pie crust rim at an angle $1/4$ inch apart. Turn back in opposite directions.

4. Turret: Cut pie crust edge at $1/2$ -inch intervals. Fold alternate squares under.

5. Braided: Cut 3 strips of pastry $1/4$ inch wide and braid. Place on pie crust rim; press down lightly.



Meringues

For 8-inch pie

2 egg whites
 $1/4$ teaspoon cream of tartar
 (optional)
 4 tablespoons sugar

For 9-inch pie

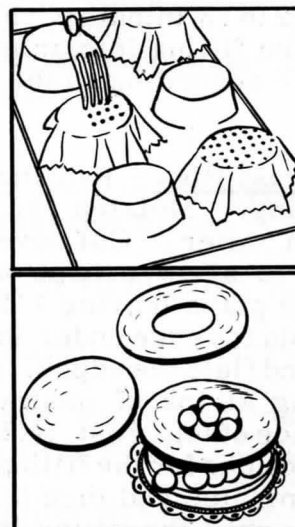
3 egg whites
 $1/4$ teaspoon cream of tartar
 (optional)
 6 tablespoons sugar

Beat whites with cream of tartar until frothy. Gradually beat in sugar a little at a time. Continue beating until thick and glossy. Place mounds of meringue around edge of filling and spread so it touches the crust all around. Heap the rest in the center. For an attractive top, make swirls with the back of a spoon. Bake at 400° from 8 to 10 minutes. Cool gradually, away from drafts.

Tarts and Tidbits

Fit left-over pastry over the back of large muffin pans, pinching it into pleats to make it fit snugly. Or cut 5-inch squares and arrange inside the muffin pan, letting the corners stand upright. Other tarts are made by cutting pastry rounds with a $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch biscuit cutter. Remove centers from half the circles. Bake on cookie sheet and put together with fruit filling.

Delicious tidbits to serve with tea or salad are made by spreading a sheet of pastry with grated cheese, or with sugar and cinnamon. Cut into fancy shapes and bake. To make attractive pin wheels spread pastry with a mixture of butter, brown sugar, and nuts. Roll up like a jelly roll, slice $1/4$ inch thick and bake.



Recipes

CHOCOLATE CHIFFON PIE

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| 1 tablespoon (envelope) gelatin | 1/2 cup sugar |
| 1/4 cup cold water | 1/4 teaspoon salt |
| 2 squares unsweetened chocolate,
grated | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| 1/2 cup boiling water | 4 egg whites, beaten |
| 4 egg yolks, beaten light | 1/2 cup sugar |
| | 9-inch baked pastry shell |

Soften gelatin in cold water for 5 minutes. Melt chocolate in boiling water; add softened gelatin and stir until dissolved. Mix in egg yolks, 1/2 cup sugar and the salt and vanilla. Cool. Beat egg whites and remaining 1/2 cup sugar together. Fold into chocolate mixture and pour into baked shell. Chill until firm. Serve with or without whipped cream.

PUMPKIN CHIFFON PIE

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| 1 tablespoon (envelope) gelatin | 1 1/2 cups cooked strained pumpkin |
| 1/4 cup cold water | 3 egg yolks, slightly beaten |
| 3/4 cup brown sugar | 1/2 cup milk |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | 3 egg whites, beaten |
| 1/2 teaspoon each of ginger,
cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice | 1/4 cup sugar |
| | 9-inch baked pastry shell |

Soften gelatin in cold water for 5 minutes. Mix brown sugar, seasonings, pumpkin, egg yolks, and milk in saucepan and cook over low heat until thick, stirring constantly. Add softened gelatin and cool. When partially set, fold in meringue made by beating egg whites and sugar together. Pile into baked shell and chill. Garnish with whipped cream and candied ginger.

LEMON FLUFF PIE

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| 4 egg yolks | Grated rind of 1 lemon |
| 1/2 cup sugar | 4 egg whites, beaten |
| 1/8 teaspoon salt | 1/2 cup sugar |
| 3 tablespoons water | 9-inch baked pastry shell |
| 1/4 cup lemon juice | |

Beat yolks until thick; add 1/2 cup sugar, salt, water, lemon juice and rind. Cook over low heat until thick, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Make meringue by beating egg-whites and remaining 1/2 cup sugar together. Fold half the meringue into the egg yolk and lemon mixture; pile mixture into baked shell. Make a wreath around edge of pie with remaining meringue and bake at 350° until delicately browned.

CHOCOLATE CHIP CREAM PIE

1/3 cup flour
2/3 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 cups milk, scalded
3 egg yolks, slightly beaten
2 tablespoons butter

1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 square chocolate, grated
9-inch baked pastry shell
3 egg whites, beaten
6 tablespoons sugar

Mix flour, 2/3 cup sugar and salt; gradually add milk. Cook over low heat until thick, stirring constantly. Add small amount of hot mixture to egg yolks; then stir this into remaining hot mixture. Cook 2 minutes. Cool; add butter and vanilla, and fold in grated chocolate. Pour into baked shell and spread with meringue made by beating egg whites and remaining sugar together. Bake in moderately hot oven (400°) from 8 to 10 minutes.

SOUR CREAM PINEAPPLE PIE

1/4 cup flour
1 cup sugar
1 cup sour cream
1 cup crushed, undrained
pineapple

2 egg yolks, slightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla
8-inch baked pastry shell
2 egg whites, beaten
1/4 cup sugar

Mix flour and 1 cup sugar. Stir in sour cream and pineapple and cook over low heat, stirring constantly until thick. Blend in egg yolks and cook 2 minutes longer. Add vanilla and cool. Pour into baked shell and cover with meringue made by beating egg whites and 1/4 cup sugar together. Bake in moderately hot oven (400°) from 8 to 10 minutes.

SOUTHERN PECAN PIE

1 cup sugar
2 tablespoons butter, melted
3 eggs
1 cup corn sirup

1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup pecan meat halves
1 unbaked pastry shell

Combine sugar and butter. Add gradually to well beaten eggs. Beat in corn sirup, salt and vanilla. Pour into unbaked shell which has been brushed with melted butter. Spread pecan halves evenly over filling. Bake at 400° for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 350° and bake until mixture sets (about 25 to 30 minutes).

FRESH FRUIT PIES

3 to 4 cups prepared fruit
1 to 1 1/2 cups sugar
1 to 2 tablespoons flour,
cornstarch, or quick-cooking
tapioca

1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon butter
Pastry

Prepare fruit, add combined dry ingredients, adjusting amounts of sugar and flour according to sweetness and juiciness of fresh fruit, and mix thoroughly. Line pie plate with pastry, fill with fruit mixture, and dot with butter; adjust top crust, or arrange lattice of pastry strips on top. Bake in hot oven (450°) for 10 minutes; then reduce heat to 350° and bake 20 to 30 minutes longer.

For fruit, use blackberries, blueberries, elderberries, loganberries, raspberries, strawberries, cherries, grapes, peaches, plums, rhubarb or a combination of fruits. If fruit is bland, add from 1 to 2 tablespoons lemon juice and if fruit is dry, add 2 or more tablespoons water.

CANNED FRUIT PIES

2 to 2 1/2 cups drained
canned fruit
1/2 to 3/4 cup juice
1/4 to 3/4 cup sugar

1 to 2 tablespoons flour, cornstarch
or quick cooking tapioca
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon butter
Pastry

Slice fruit if large fruit is used; add juice and combined dry ingredients, adjusting amounts of sugar and flour according to sweetness and juiciness of canned fruit, and mix thoroughly. Line pie plate with pastry and fill with fruit mixture; dot with butter and adjust top crust, or arrange lattice of pastry strips on top. Bake in hot oven (450°) for 10 minutes; then reduce heat to 350° and bake about 25 minutes longer.

For fruit, use apples, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, elderberries, gooseberries, peaches, pineapple, plums, raspberries, or strawberries.

1952 NATIONAL CHERRY PIE WINNER

3 cups red sour canned
cherries, drained
1 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons cornstarch

1/4 cup cherry juice
1 tablespoon butter
4 drops red food coloring (optional)
Pastry

Combine sugar, salt, cornstarch and cherry juice in a saucepan. Cook until it begins to boil rapidly. Then add drained cherries carefully. Continue cooking gently until the desired thickness is reached. Remove from heat. Add butter and red food coloring. Line pie plate with pastry, and fill with cooled cherry filling. Cover with crust and bake in hot oven (450°) for 10 minutes. Reduce the heat to 375° and bake for 15 or 20 minutes.

FRENCH PEACH PIE

2 1/2 cups canned or cooked unsweetened dried peaches	1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup peach liquid	1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1 tablespoon cornstarch	2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 cup sugar	1 tablespoon butter
1/8 teaspoon salt	Pastry

Arrange drained peaches in pastry-lined 9-inch pie plate. Heat peach liquid, add cornstarch combined with sugar, salt and spices. Cook until clear and thickened. Remove from heat; add lemon juice and butter. Pour over peaches and cover with crumbly crust topping. Bake pie at 425° for 40 minutes.

Crumbly Crust

1/2 cup brown sugar	1/3 cup flour
1/4 cup butter	1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Blend ingredients together with a fork until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

CRANBERRY-APPLE PIE

4 tart apples	1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1 1/4 cup cranberries	1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup sugar	Pastry

Pare, core and slice apples thin. Wash and cut cranberries in halves. Line a 9-inch pie plate with pastry. Place a layer of apples in the bottom of the pie plate. Add cranberries. Cover with remaining apples. Sprinkle with the mixture of sugar, cinnamon, and salt. Cover with pastry and bake at 450° for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350° and bake 35 minutes longer. Crumbly Crust topping may be used in place of the upper crust.

RHUBARB PIE

3 cups diced rhubarb	1 egg, slightly beaten
1 1/2 cups sugar	1 tablespoon butter
2 tablespoons cornstarch	Pastry

Line a 9-inch pie plate with pastry and fill with diced rhubarb. Combine sugar and cornstarch, stir in egg and pour over rhubarb. Dot with butter. Cover with lattice crust and bake at 450° for 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350° and bake 25 to 30 minutes longer. Crumbly Crust topping may be used in place of the upper crust.