

Freezing Pies and Pie Filling Saves Time During Holiday Rush



The holidays just aren't the same without Great-grandma Mary's famous fruit pies. But as we all know, the holiday season is hectic and sometimes there just isn't time to make some of our favorite family recipes.

Fortunately, you can make those favorite pies in advance and freeze them. This will save valuable time when you're in a holiday rush, but still get that long-time family favorite pie on the table, said Barbara Brown, Oklahoma State University Extension food specialist.

"You have a couple of options when it comes to freezing fruit pies. First, you can make the pie and freeze it. It's best to freeze an unbaked pie to help ensure it has a fresher fruit flavor," Brown said. "Another option is to freeze the filling and crust separately to prevent fruit juice from penetrating and softening the lower crust during freezing. Freezing the unbaked pie will take up more space in your freezer and ties up that pie pan."

When freezing the filling and crust separately, put the pre-measured fruit filling for one pie in a large freezer bag and squeeze out all of the air. Cooks also can put the bag of cooled filling into a foil-lined pie pan, shaping it to fit the pan. When it's frozen, simply remove the filling and the pan is ready for other uses in the kitchen. When the holidays arrive, simply put the frozen filling in a fresh crust. Allow an extra 20 or so minutes for cooking.

Brown said freezing pie dough also can be a time saver during the holiday season. Roll the dough into circles and freeze on lined cardboard separated with pieces of parchment paper. You also can freeze unbaked dough in pie pans by stacking the pastry-filled pans with two layers of freezer paper between them. Place in a freezer bag to help ensure freshness.

"Go ahead and prick pastry that will be baked unfilled, but don't prick dough that will be filled before baking," she said. "Dough shaped in pans before freezing doesn't need to be thawed before baking."

Some bakers choose to freeze the whole pie first, whether baked or unbaked, then wrap them after they are frozen solid. If you choose this option, do not cut vents in the top crust of an unbaked pie before freezing. This can be done just before baking. A baked pie that has been frozen can be served without reheating. Keep in mind food safety and thaw a baked pie in the refrigerator.

Bake frozen pies in the lower third of the oven at 425 degrees Fahrenheit for 25 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 degrees and move the pie to the center of the oven to finish baking. Be sure to place the pies on a cookie sheet or drip pan to help catch juices that may overflow.

To help maintain color in frozen pies, add one-half teaspoon of ascorbic acid or commercial color preserver with the sugar when preparing peach, pear or apple pies. Also, consider adding an extra tablespoon of flour or tapioca or one-half tablespoon of cornstarch or modified food starch to unbaked fruit pies. This will help keep them from bubbling over when baking.

Freezing causes liquids thickened with flour or cornstarch to separate a bit, so fillings thickened with tapioca or modified food starch will maintain their consistency better.

"The holiday season can be extremely hectic, and you don't want to be stuck in the kitchen cooking the whole time," Brown said. "Preparing your favorite family fruit pies ahead of schedule will help ensure you get to spend more time with your family."

xxx

Major County OSU Extension Center

500 E. Broadway
Courthouse Suite 3
Fairview, OK 73737

Phone- 580-227-3786

Fax- 580-227-4786

Email-

dana.baldwin@okstate.edu

Website-

extension.okstate.edu/county/major

Facebook page-

Major County OSU Extension

Blaine County OSU Extension Center

212 N. Weigle Ave.
Courthouse Suite 101
Watonga, OK 73772

Phone- 580-623-5195

Fax- 580-623-5242

Email-

dana.baldwin@okstate.edu

Website-

extension.okstate.edu/county/blaine

Facebook page-

Blaine County OSU Extension

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Tips for Cleaning Following COVID-19 Diagnosis



Keeping a home clean is important anytime, but cleaning and disinfecting following a COVID-19 diagnosis helps reduce risk to others.

For many people, it's second nature to dust furniture, vacuum the carpet and wipe down surfaces during normal household chores. More steps are needed now, and the details are important.

If someone in your home has been diagnosed with and is recovering or is now recovered from COVID-19, clean as you normally would then disinfect to further reduce risk. It's important to know the difference between cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning with soap and water reduces germs, dirt and impurities on surfaces. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces. Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, light switches, phones, computer keyboards, toilets and faucets.

Stores are beginning to get more cleaning products on the shelves, but some products can still be hard to find. If you're having trouble finding your favorite products, you can always use a [diluted household bleach solution](#) if appropriate for the surface. Check the label on the bleach to make sure it contains 5.25%-8.25% sodium hypochlorite. Four teaspoons of bleach per quart of water makes a good amount of disinfecting solution.

Be sure to wear reusable or disposable gloves, and make sure there is adequate ventilation in the room. Follow the directions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of products. Disinfecting solution works best when sprayed on surfaces and left for at least one minute before wiping it off. Disinfect high-touch surfaces such as tables, light switches, doorknobs, faucets and toilets frequently.

When doing the laundry of someone with COVID or who has recovered, wash according to manufacturer's directions and dry completely. It's a good idea to wear disposable gloves when handling any bedding or clothing items of an infected person. These items can be washed with other people's items. Be sure to clean and disinfect clothes hampers. Once the laundry is in the washing machine, remove the gloves and throw them away.

Keeping hands clean is one of the best ways to avoid spreading germs. Always wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after nose-blowing, coughing or sneezing. Other key times to wash hands include after using the restroom, after contact with a person who is sick, before eating or preparing food and after contact with animals or other pets. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

As we continue to see an increase of COVID-19 cases it's important for everyone to take the necessary steps to cut down the spread of the virus.

Food Handlers: Food Safety Training

Choose from one of these 2020 dates:

**-Tuesday, December 8 or Tuesday, December 15
-2:30 P.M.**

**-Online Format Only (Zoom)
(participants will need internet access)**



Everyone is welcome to participate in either of these **free online** Food Handlers Food Safety classes presented by Major and Blaine Counties OSU Extension. This is a basic food safety class that will last approximately 1 & 1/2 hours. Anyone currently working in any capacity with food service and/or regularly cooking for large groups is encouraged to attend. All participants passing the final exam will receive a certificate.

Please register at least one day prior to the class you plan to participate in. We will need your name, phone number and email address.

Contact/Presenter is: Dana Baldwin, Extension Educator– FCS/4-H & Major County Extension Director
dana.baldwin@okstate.edu (e-mail)

Major County OSU Extension
500 E. Broadway, Suite 3 Courthouse
Fairview, Oklahoma 73737
580-227-3786 (phone)
580-227-4786 (fax)

Blaine County OSU Extension
212 N. Weigle, Suite 101 Courthouse
Watonga, Oklahoma 73772
580-623-5195 (phone)
580-623-5242 (fax)



Blaine County OHCE News and Notes



Lesson Leader Trainings

The lesson materials for your January meetings will be available for pick up by Thursday, December 16. The topic is "Budgeting Basics."

The Lesson Leader Training in January (for your February meetings) is Thursday, January 28 at 10 a.m. at the Watonga Library. The lesson topic is "Don't Just Sit There/Get Fit While You Sit" with Susan Holliday, Extension Educator from Alfalfa & Woods Counties as the guest presenter. Please make plans to attend if you are able.

Awards

Information for OHCE awards (Member of the Year and Heart of OHCE) will be sent out to group presidents soon and the completed applications will be due January 15. Let Dana know if you need assistance.

Check us out on Facebook!

Check out details in this newsletter for upcoming programs that may be of interest to you. For updates and announcements, check out and "Like" our page on Facebook:
Blaine County OSU Extension

Officer & Parliamentary Procedure Training

Makes plans to participate in the multi-county OHCE Officer and Parliamentary Procedure Training on Saturday, January 9 from 10 am. to 2 p.m. at the Alfalfa County Fairgrounds in Cherokee. There will be a \$10 fee per person to cover lunch and training supplies, so please RSVP by January 5. We plan to have a short session on self-defense as well. Counties included are Alfalfa, Blaine, Major and Woods.

2021 District Meeting

The 2021 West District (north region) OHCE Meeting is set for Thursday, March 25. A decision will be made at the beginning of January if it will be held in person or in a virtual format. Remember, host counties are Blaine, Major and Kingfisher. Be looking for more details.

Holiday Bazaar & Santa's Village

Thank you to everyone that helped make this year's Holiday Bazaar & Santa's Village on December 5 happen. Even with fewer vendors and a bit smaller crowd it was successful. Let's look forward to next year!



**January 7, 14, 21, 28
2021**

Each class session will meet from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
at the First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Okeene

For parents and other caregivers where the following topics will be addressed:

- Being an Active Parent
- Cooperation & Communication
- Responsibility & Discipline
- Building Courage & Self Esteem
- Understanding & Redirecting Misbehavior
- Active Parenting for School Success

Fee for the class is \$20.00 per participant per entire session.

Please pre-register by Tuesday, January 5.
(at least 4 people must be pre-registered for the class to be held)

If interested, contact either the Major or Blaine County OSU Cooperative Extension Center.

580.227.3786 (Major County) 580-623-5195 (Blaine County)

2021

Lunchtime Learning Sessions

-Major and Blaine Counties-

*Featuring Seasonal Make-and-Take Activities
and a brief Educational Program Focusing on Self-Improvement*

One hour sessions from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

Major County: County Fairgrounds in Fairview/Blaine County: Watonga Public Library

-Sweet & Simple Tulle Valentine Wreath & "Eating Smart"-

Tuesday, January 26 in Major County

Wednesday, January 27 In Blaine County

-Easter Egg Wreath & "Financial Affairs"-

Tuesday, February 23 in Blaine County

Wednesday, February 24 In Major County

-Spring Colander Planter & "Practice Being Safe"-

Tuesday, March 30 in Blaine County

Wednesday, March 31 in Major County



**Bring your own lunch and come take part in these programs.
\$10.00 fee per person per session to cover the cost of supplies.**

**Register by calling either the Major County or the Blaine County OSU Extension Center.
(Major County- 580-227-3786/Blaine County- 580-623-5195)
RSVP at least one week prior to the session you plan to attend.**



Dana Baldwin

*Major & Blaine Counties Extension Educator
Family & Consumer Sciences/4-H Youth Development
and Major County Extension Director*

500 E. Broadway, Courthouse Suite 3
Fairview, Oklahoma 73737

212 N. Weigle Avenue, Courthouse Suite 101
Watonga, Oklahoma 73772

dana.baldwin@okstate.edu

EXTENSION



Blaine County OSU Extension Center
 212 N. Weigle Ave., Suite 101 Courthouse
 Watonga, Oklahoma 73772

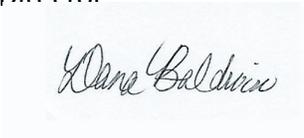
**OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE
 EXTENSION SERVICE**

COVID 19 Guidelines

Please note that for any OSU Extension program or event, the current CDC guidelines for COVID 19 will be followed including social distancing, wearing masks, proper sanitizing, etc. Do not attend or participate if you are feeling ill or if you are uncomfortable in doing so. Stay safe!

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Dana Baldwin
 Extension Educator-
 Family & Consumer Sciences/4-H Youth Development
 Major and Blaine Counties
 and Major County Extension Director



Newsletter Editor:

Family & Consumer Sciences assists communities, families, youth and individuals address issues of health, wealth and well-being through research-based Extension education and programs that are proven to work.



Oklahoma Home & Community Education, Inc. (OHCE) is a local and state wide partner with Cooperative Extension which brings the best knowledge from OSU to its members. Join a local OHCE group and enjoy programs that help make Oklahomans be their best.

www.OHCE.okstate.edu