The Best Cherry Pie

It’s cherry season so I always pick up a few pounds of cherries every time I go to the store until they are no longer in season. The season is too short, in my opinion, so I buy enough for at least one pie, or part of a pie and then see what happens. What that means is, sometimes I make a 4 cherry pie with sweet cherries, dried sour cherries, rainier cherries and Trader Joe’s Morello cherries in the jar. I’ve never ever used the canned cherries in the red sticky syrup. I’m not judging if someone else likes that, but to me, cherries are superb on their own, stupendous in a pie, and don’t need to come from a can. Why not savor them for the short season and dream of them the rest of the year? The BEST cherry I’ve ever made was with just fresh cherries—**2lbs sweet cherries and 1lb Rainier cherries** which are sweeter than the “sweet” ones. Yes, I said pounds, not cups or ounces. I like a big cherry pie.

Prepare **a single-crust pie dough**. Let it rest while assembling the filling.

Pit the cherries. I find this meditative and when I mull over what I’m working on in my writing. Add about **a tablespoon of lemon juice** to the pitted cherries. Add **½ cup of sugar** to the cherries and mix well. Let them sit for 15 minutes or so while they juice. In the meantime, mix **2 tablespoons of sugar with 3 tablespoons of cornstarch** in a small bowl.

Make brown sugar topping. Add  **½ cup of brown sugar** in a food processor bowl with **½ stick (¼ cup) butter**. Pulse until a grainy texture. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Add cornstarch and sugar mixture to cherries until smooth.

Roll out dough and insert in 8-inch pie pan. Add cherry filling. Bake at 375 degrees ( should have said to preheat at the top) for 30 minutes. Sprinkle brown sugar topping on and reduce temperature to 400 and bake for about 20-30 minutes until bubbling, oozing and smelling oh so good. Let it rest for 20 minutes or until you just can’t stand it any longer. Careful not to burn your tongue, and EAT.

Why is it the BEST? Because it’s the best one I’ve ever made and I’ve made so many different combinations. They all have a time and a place, like the 4 cherry pie is sometimes necessary at the end of cherry season when cherries aren’t as plentiful. Raniers, on the other hand have a very short season, shorter than regular sweet cherries, so when Raniers are available, then I focus on them. If it’s winter and I need to make a cherry pie, because let’s face it, sometimes we NEED pie, I’ll use nothing but TJ’s jarred cherries. It’s still good, but not the same.