



## NOSTALGIA PIE

An autumn apple treat

Fried pies are a tradition passed down through generations in the South, born out of modest means and the necessity for thrift in home kitchens. Resourceful cooks used ingredients they had on hand—lard, flour, and dried apples—to create hand pies known as apple jacks. Their portability made

them easy to tuck into lunchboxes of schoolchildren or factory workers for a sweet midday treat. Rehydrating the dried apples in apple cider and cider vinegar concentrates their flavor, making the pastries less sweet and more intense than your standard apple pie. While modern interpretations of the filling may be spiced with sage or cardamom, the original called for no embellishments, letting the apples take center stage. Make the filling ahead of time so it has a chance to cool—any residual heat from the apples will cause the dough to stretch and possibly tear when folding and sealing the pies. If the butter becomes too soft while incorporating it into the crust, pop the bowl into the refrigerator or freezer for a few minutes until it firms back up. Traditionally, the dough is pulled apart into small balls and rolled out into rounds, rather than rolled out and cut. This waste-free method harkens back to the pies' origins and creates a more rustic appearance. If you can, choose leaf lard—the highest grade in quality—for its high smoke point and especially neutral flavor. Use a cast-iron skillet to fry the pies and don't overcrowd it. This will help the lard stay at a consistent temperature, key for attaining that crackly golden crust. —*Lia Grabowski*

PHOTOS BY JONATHAN BONCEK

### TLP's Apple Jacks

#### For the filling:

2 cups chopped dried apples  
3 cups apple cider  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
½ cup sugar  
¼ teaspoon kosher salt

#### For the crust:

2½ cups flour, plus extra  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 cup unsalted butter, chilled and cubed

⅓ - ½ cup cold water  
2 cups lard for frying

Makes 6 hand pies



1

#### SIMMER FILLING

Combine filling ingredients in a small pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until apples have softened and absorbed nearly all liquid. Remove from heat and cool, first at room temperature, then in refrigerator.



2

#### MAKE DOUGH

Combine dry ingredients. Using your fingers in a snapping motion, incorporate butter. Add water and use a fork to toss until combined. Form dough into a disc, cover in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 1 hour.



3

#### ROLL OUT DOUGH

Prepare a sheet tray with parchment paper and a light dusting of flour. On a floured work surface, roll out dough to ⅛-inch thickness and cut into 6-inch rounds. Transfer rounds to prepared sheet pan and refrigerate for at least 10 minutes.



4

#### FILL THEM UP

Spoon filling into dough rounds, leaving ample space around the edges. Dip your fingertips into a small bowl of water and wet edges of dough all the way around.



5

#### SEAL THE PIES

Fold dough over onto itself to form a half-moon shape and press lightly with your fingers to seal the edges. Using a floured fork, crimp edges. Return pies to the fridge to chill until ready to fry.



6

#### FRY AND DRAIN

In a heavy-bottomed skillet, heat lard to 375 degrees. In batches, cook rounds for 5 minutes, then flip and cook for another 3 minutes, until golden-brown. Move fried pies to a paper towel-lined rack to drain and cool.