



These hand pies have been taste tested by the most opinionated Southern gentlemen I know. Bob Keen Sr., who owns the barn where I board my horse, said that the only other person who could make a good pie like this was his mama. For him, the pies brought back childhood memories of his mama standing over the stove in the farmhouse that still stands on their ranch. These pies can be prepped the night before frying for a hot, fresh breakfast treat.

southern-fried apple hand pies

MAKES 10 TO 12 HAND PIES

1. Peel, core, and chop the apples into small pieces. Melt the butter in a 10- to 12-inch skillet. Cook the apples over medium heat for 15–20 minutes, until soft. Sprinkle with brown sugar and granulated sugar, adjusting for sweetness, while they cook. Stir occasionally with a wooden spoon, making sure the apples don't stick or burn. When the apples are nearly done, dissolve the cornstarch in water and add to the apples; continue cooking to thicken the juice. Remove from heat, add the cinnamon and nutmeg, and stir to combine. Let the pie filling cool completely. You can prep the apple filling a day or two ahead and refrigerate until you assemble the pies.

2. Line a half sheet pan with parchment paper and set aside.

3. On a lightly floured surface, divide the pie crust into 4- to 6-inch ovals about $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Scoop about 1 tablespoon of the cooled pie filling into the center of each round. Fold over and lightly press down on the filling and the edges. Trim the edges of the hand pie with a small pizza cutter, if necessary, to even out the edges. Crimp the edges of the dough with a floured fork. Place uncooked pies on the parchment-lined sheet pan. (If prepping the pies the night before serving, cover loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate. Proceed with frying instructions when ready to cook.)

4. Line another half sheet pan with several layers of paper towels and set aside.

5. Fill a large, deep skillet with 2 to 3 inches of canola oil. Heat the oil to about 375 degrees F. Place only a few hand pies in the hot oil at a time, so as not to overcrowd the pan or let the oil cool. Fry until pies are brown on both sides, 3–4 minutes. Remove from the hot oil and let drain on paper towels. Sprinkle pies with granulated sugar or dust with powdered sugar while still warm. These are best served warm.

10 to 12 large baking apples (such as Granny Smith, Macoun, McIntosh, or Braeburn)

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

3 tablespoons brown sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar

1 tablespoon cornstarch

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, hot

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Pie crust or biscuit dough

Canola oil, for frying

Granulated or powdered sugar, for dusting