

RUTH WATSON'S BRAMLEY APPLE PIE

You will need a deep, white-enamelled, blue-rimmed traditional pie dish, measuring 32cm x 24cm from one edge of the rim to the other and two pie raisers.

6-8 large Bramley apples (about 2.5kgs)
160g unrefined caster sugar, plus extra to sprinkle
1 large free-range egg white, lightly whisked

For the pastry

225g plain flour
1 tsp icing sugar
140g cold unsalted butter, roughly cubed
1 large free-range egg yolk



1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/ fan160°C/ gas 4. Make the pastry. It's easiest to use a food processor: whizz the flour, icing sugar and a pinch of sea salt together for a few seconds, then add the butter. Whizz for another few seconds, until it looks like coarse breadcrumbs. Whisk the egg yolk and 3 tablespoons of ice-cold water together and pour it into the flour mixture. Whizz until it has collected into a ball around the spindle. Take out, wrap in cling film and chill for 1 hour.
2. Take out the pastry, let it return to cool room temperature, then roll it out – the pie wants a substantial-but-crisp crust, so make it thicker than the chamois-leather thickness used to line a flan tin. Upturn the pie dish onto the centre of the pastry and use it as a template – adding an extra inch all the way round – and cut out the top crust. From the remnants of

the pastry, cut out a 5cm strip, long enough to go round the dish. Arrange it so it covers both the rim and a little way down the sides of the dish. Press it into place, making joins where necessary. Put the 2 pie raisers in the middle of the dish.

3. Quarter, core and peel the apples, then cut into chunky slices. Put a layer into the dish, sprinkle generously with some of the sugar, then continue layering and sugaring them until they form a big heap around the pie raisers. Brush the pastry rim with cold water, then cover with the top crust. Using forefingers and thumbs, pinch the pastry rim and crust together, crimping to make a tight seal.
4. Using a small, sharp knife make a few slashes in the top crust, then put the pie in the fridge to rest for at least 30 minutes, and up to 8 hours (lightly covered with cling-film if left for a while).
5. Just before the pie goes in the oven, brush the top crust with the egg white, and then sprinkle with caster sugar. Bake for about 45 minutes, or until the crust is a shimmering, golden-brown. It's better served very warm than piping hot so will relish being left in a warm place for anything up to 2 hours.

