Cherry Pie Filling

Colorful homemade cherry pie filling
Yield:

About 3 cups
Ingredients:

3 cups pitted sour cherries*
1 1/2 cups sugar
approximately 1/2 cup water
approximately 1-2 tablespoons clear jel or cornstarch, for thickening

(Please see additional notes before making!)
Instructions:

1.
Combine fruit and sugar in a pan and stir together. If cherries are
soft and mushy, you won’t need additional water, but if cherries are
firm, add 1/4 to 1/2 cup water. Bring to a boil.

2. Mix cornstarch or clear jel** with some cold water or reserved
cherry juice (about 2 tablespoons of cold water with 2 tablespoons corn
starch or clear jel), whisking to remove lumps.

3. When cherries are boiling, add thickening while stirring constantly to prevent lumps. Add enough thickening to make the consistency you desire. We like our pies fairly thick, but cheesecake
topping thinner. Stir the thickening as it bubbles, just until the
juices are clear. (When the filling looks clear, it’s fully cooked.

Over-cooking will start to break down the filling.)

4. Pour into pie crusts (unbaked pastry) for pies (bake pies at 425 degrees for about 30 minutes or until browned) or use as topping in other recipes.

Additional Notes:

*You
can use sour or sweet cherries for this recipe, but you will need to
adjust the sugar if using sweet cherries. I would use about 1/2 to 3/4
cup of sugar for sweet cherries. If using sweet cherries, you may wish
to add a tablespoon of lemon juice or a pinch of citric acid, since
sweet cherries won't be as tart as sour cherries.

The texture of the cherries will also make a difference in this
recipe. I have used really ripe sour cherries from my parents' trees,
and those are very juicy and tart, needing no additional water or citric
acid. I have also used sweet cherries from a neighbor's tree, and those
were again, really ripe and soft and made a nice juicy filling!

However, using firmer cherries from a store will necessitate the
addition of some water… and you can also boil the cherries, sugar, and
water for several minutes without risk of them falling apart and
looking mushy in your pies or on your cheesecakes.

**Cornstarch thickens, and will continue to become thicker as

your
mixture cools. Do not make it as thick when hot as you would like it to
be when it has cooled, or it will be too thick.

Clear jel, however, is the same thickness hot as it is cold. We prefer clear jel for thickening pie filling, as it is easier to see the consistency, and the pies don’t tend to run over in the oven as easily.