



from the market

Mason jar lid pies, with local cherries and blueberries

Every Thursday, a line of white tents decorates Broxton Avenue for the Westwood Village Farmers Market. In addition to street food vendors and craft-makers, local farmers from California come to offer large varieties of produce that include everything from bright green lettuces to vibrant oranges. On one such Thursday, prime paid a visit to the market in search of delicious and fresh ingredients for a classic summer favorite – pie. For this recipe, our primary ingredients consisted of two different cherry varieties, blueberries and the passion of hardworking local farmers. All of these were then packed into mason jar lids, making a miniature but flavorful treat. So keeping this recipe in your back pocket, join prime as we kick off the summer with a fresh and portable dessert, perfect for any day trip or weekend excursion. And know that wherever you go, you'll also be taking a bit of California geography along with you. In our particular case, we've used fruits from the soils of Bakersfield and Riverside.

GAYTAN FAMILY FARMS

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At the very end of the row of vendor tents, Gaytan Family Farms displayed a wide range of produce – carrots, beets, lettuces – but the red, blue and purple shades of seasonal berries stood out the most to the sweet tooth in us. Orlando Saravia manned this area of the booth, guarding the strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries that decorated the table in an aesthetic mosaic. When asked what his favorite produce was,

his answer was immediate. “Strawberries and berries. ... I could eat them all day,” he said. Saravia takes on the farmers market circuit for Gaytan Family Farms, a farm that, while not certified organic, pledges not to use sprays and pesticides. The berries Saravia was selling, that include the blueberries in our pies, hailed from their location in the Riverside area, but the farm also grows produce in San

Luis Obispo and Santa Maria, California. Saravia said the farm has been established for over a decade, producing a wide range of crops that provide for Southern California and beyond. “It’s a different job. We go all over the place,” Saravia said. “It’s not like staying in the office like a regular job.” Saravia said he enjoys his work for all of the different people he gets to meet and the different produce he gets

to taste. As he left us to help a customer, our eyes browsed the available produce in front of us, and we picked out two baskets of blueberries to take home. For Saravia, the perfect blueberry is sweet, juicy and firm, and best used in pies, pancakes, smoothies or even margaritas. We popped a few blueberries in our mouths as we parted ways with Saravia, and we can definitely attest to their sweet, pie-ready flavors.



After passing various booths for tacos, fresh flowers and homemade baskets, Murray Family Farms was the first available produce vendor on the day of our visit. As we approached, a smiling Ryan Ramirez, son-in-law to the farm’s founders, Steve and Vicky Murray, offered us what felt like dozens of free samples. We tried everything from pluots to raspberries, but it was the cherries that ultimately excited

our tastebuds. “Cherries are our biggest crop. (They’re) kind of our love-craft,” Ramirez said. “We spend more time and energy developing new grades of cherries than anything else. It’s really what we’re most proud of.” Located in Bakersfield, California, Murray Family Farms has been in business for 20 years and now produces 30 different varieties of cherries, along with many other berries and

stone fruits. In just those two decades, Ramirez said the farm has grown from a small roadside stand to what he describes as the Disneyland of farms, equipped with mazes, hayrides and petting zoos. Depending on the season, people can also come to the farm and pick their own fruits, choosing varieties suited to their own tastes. While the cherries we picked out – the dark flavor giants and the yellow royal rainiers –

MURRAY FAMILY FARMS

weren’t from our own hands, they came highly recommended by Ramirez, especially since they are nearing the end of their peak season. Ramirez described his favorite cherries as dark and sweet with a red wine richness. Even though our cherries are meant for pies, we’ll most likely save some to engage in what Ramirez said was his preferred method of eating – “I like to throw them way up in the air and catch them in my mouth.”



recipe

MATERIALS:

For both:
8-10 mason jar lids
Mixing bowl
Mixing spoon
Baking sheet
Knife
Aluminum foil
Pre-made pie crust

For cherry filling	For blueberry filling
2 cups cherries	1 ¼ cup blueberries
1 tablespoon cornstarch	½ cup sugar
¼ cup sugar	⅓ cup flour
dash of salt	dash of salt
1 tablespoon of melted butter	½ tablespoon of lemon juice
1 tablespoon of cubed butter	1 tablespoon of cubed butter

instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Line the baking sheet with aluminum foil to help with easy cleanup should the pies spill over while baking.
2. Prepare the fillings. For the cherry pie, combine the cherries, cornstarch, sugar, salt and butter and let stand for 15 minutes. For the blueberry pie, combine the blueberries, sugar, salt and lemon juice.
3. Lay out the mason jar lids on the baking sheet with the rubber seals facing down. Line the lids with a circle of pie crust. Be sure to leave enough dough to hang over the edge just a bit.
4. Dot the pie crusts with the cubed butter and then fill each pie with either cherry or blueberry filling. Be careful not to overfill them, or they will likely bubble over in the oven.
5. Cover the pies with another layer of pie crust. Pinch the top and bottom layers of dough together and cut a slit in the top, so that the pies can release steam while baking.
6. Bake the pies for 30 minutes or until golden brown. If the crust starts to brown too quickly, cover the pies in aluminum foil. For a crispier pie, bake for five to 10 minutes extra.
7. Remove from the oven, let cool and enjoy! Or if you're impatient like us, feel free to eat these sweet and steamy desserts right away.