**CONCORD GRAPE PIE**

While many [grape](https://www.yahoo.com/food/roast-grapes-rule-at-life-86614437381.html) varietals, such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir, trace their lineage to [historic](https://www.yahoo.com/food/tagged/history) vineyards all over [Europe](https://www.yahoo.com/food/the-definitive-street-foods-of-england-denmark-and-12-85047445606.html), the Concord is a distinctly [American](https://www.yahoo.com/food/10-all-american-classics-for-the-fourth-of-july-89990145938.html) grape (and arguably the one Americans love the most!). And it’s [in season now](http://www.specialtyproduce.com/produce/Concord_Grapes_20251.php), from Michigan to Ohio to its eponymous Concord, Massachusetts.

For that, we have an amateur botanist named Ephraim Wales Bull to thank. In the 1840s, the Concord native discovered a sweet-tasting vine crawling up a wall on his property and [crossed its fruit with with a native American grape called “Catawba](http://books.google.com/books?id=gbKnf5DFdpUC&lpg=PA284&dq=concord%20grape%20ephraim&pg=PA72#v=onepage&q=concord&f=false).” The result was a purple-black [grape](https://www.yahoo.com/food/tagged/fruit) with a [rich, intensely sweet flavor.](http://imbibemagazine.com/Elements-Concord-Grapes)

It wasn’t long before a dentist named Dr. Thomas Welch took notice. In 1869, he developed a method to halt fermentation in bottled Concord grape juice, which he sold to churches as nonalcoholic communion [wine](https://www.yahoo.com/food/tagged/wine).

Welch’s son Charles took things a step further. ”Advertised to older people and to children as ‘the national drink,’ Welch’s Concord Grape Juice made this American grape seem fundamentally different from the European varieties used for wine,” writes Phillip J. Pauly in his 2007 book [Fruit and Plains: The Horticultural Transformation of America](http://books.google.com/books?id=gbKnf5DFdpUC&pg=PA284&dq=concord+grape+ephraim&hl=en&sa=X&ei=jO4iVKnZEMypogSO0oCwDg&ved=0CC4Q6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=concord&f=false).

But Concord grapes shouldn’t be relegated to the realm of sugary juices and sickly sweet kosher wines. The [berries](https://www.yahoo.com/food/tagged/berries)—yes, they’re technically [berries](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/grape)—are excellent in juicy, hearty [pies](https://www.yahoo.com/food/tagged/pie) such as the one [invented by Irene Bouchard](http://www.saveur.com/article/Recipes/Concord-Grape-Pie), the so-called Grape Pie Queen of Naples, New York. (Bouchard also had some great [tips](http://www.naplesvalleyny.com/grapePieCapitol.pdf) on getting the grape’s seeds out).

[This Concord grape jam tart](http://www.marthastewart.com/355342/concord-grape-jam-tart) from Martha Stewart also strikes our fancy. A dollop of crème fraiche, served atop each syrupy slice, delivers a rich and creamy note to the finish.

On the lighter side of the [baking](https://www.yahoo.com/food/tagged/baking) spectrum, sweet berries are a delight when sprinkled in a moist buttermilk-spiked cornmeal [cake](https://www.yahoo.com/food/tagged/cake), such as [this one from Bon Appétit](http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Concord-Grape-Cornmeal-Cake-51122620). A teaspoon of grated lemon zest adds a barely-there bitter note for balance.

Concord grape season [only lasts through mid-fall](http://books.google.com/books?id=Ier6CmQ-e-kC&pg=PA102&dq=concord+grape+season&hl=en&sa=X&ei=Of8iVNuKBMerogSPi4LYBQ&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=concord%20grape%20season&f=false), so get ‘em while they’re still at peak deliciousness.

Makes one 9” pie

**INGREDIENTS:**

1. 2 1/2 cups flour  
   2. 1 tsp. salt   
   3. 18 Tbsp. chilled unsalted butter, cut into small pieces   
   4. 2 lbs. concord grapes, stemmed  
   5. 3/4–1 cup sugar   
   6. 2 Tbsp. quick-cooking tapioca   
   7/. 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

**DIRECTIONS:**

For the pastry: Whisk flour and salt together in a large bowl. Using a pastry cutter or 2 table knives, work butter into flour until mixture resembles coarse meal. Sprinkle in up to 10 tbsp. ice water, stirring dough with a fork until it just holds together. Press dough into a rough ball, then transfer to a lightly floured surface. Give dough several quick kneads until smooth. Divide dough into 2 balls, one slightly larger than the other, wrap each in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 2 hours.

For the filling: Slip pulp of each grape out of its skin into a medium saucepan, put skins into a large bowl, and set aside. Cook pulp over medium heat, stirring often, until soft, 8–10 minutes, then strain into bowl with skins, pressing on solids with the back of a spoon. Discard seeds. Set aside to cool completely. Stir sugar and tapioca into grapes and set aside.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Roll the larger dough ball out on a lightly floured surface into a 12” round, then fit into a 9” pie plate. Transfer grape filling to pastry bottom and scatter butter on top. Roll the remaining dough ball out on the lightly floured surface into a 10” round, cut a 1” hole in center of dough to let steam escape, then cover filling with pastry round. Fold edges of dough under and crimp edges. Bake pie for 20 minutes, reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees, and continue baking until pastry is golden brown, 45–50 minutes more. Set pie aside to cool completely.

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