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By Susie Iventosch



Berry pie with crumb topping Photo Susie Iventosch

Pie makes a wonderful dessert any time of the year and it's really not difficult to make - even with homemade crust! Fresh fruit is available nearly the whole year through, from strawberries in the early spring to peaches, nectarines and berries in the summer, and apples and pumpkins in the fall. In the dark winter months, chocolate comes in handy for baking a chocolate cream pie. So, you see, pies are great all year long! But, summertime is especially divine for fresh mixed berry pies. You can either head down to your local farmers' market, where you'll find raspberry and blueberry purveyors displaying fresh picked berries now or you can pick your own wild berries while hiking in the woods. Just about any mixture will work well, but you need about 8 cups of fruit, which can take many hours of picking!

I remember going to Brentwood one year with my grandmother to pick peaches for jam. We were

quite a sight climbing up the ladders to pick the ripe fruit - she was in her 80s and I was several months pregnant. Neither one of us wanted the other to do the climbing, but in the end, I think I won out and left her on the ground worrying. Those days, farmers' markets hadn't made their resurgence and to get just-picked produce we really had to head to the farms. We are so lucky these days to have great farmers' market networks, bringing perfectly ripe produce practically to our doorsteps.

One year, I made a berry pie birthday dessert for our good friend, Mike Miller of Moraga. Since his birthday is in March, I am certain that at least some frozen berries went into that particular dessert. It didn't much matter to him ... he's never forgotten that pie, and now almost every time we get together, the idea of berry pie surfaces in the conversation. And, like anything else in life, the fresher the better, so whenever possible, it's best made with fresh seasonal berries. This pie can be made with just about any combination of berries you like, but I use blueberries, boysenberries or blackberries, and raspberries in roughly equal proportions.

Moraga Farmers' Market -Sundays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Orinda Farmers' Market -Saturdays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Lafayette Farmers' Market - could be coming to you on August 21

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