

# ICEBOX KEY LIME PIE

SERVES 8 TO 10

Use instant pudding, which requires no stovetop cooking, for this recipe. Do not be tempted to use bottled lime juice, which lacks depth of flavor.

## Crust

- 8 whole graham crackers, broken into small pieces
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

## Filling

- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ( $1\frac{3}{4}$  ounces) sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated lime zest plus 1 cup juice (8 limes)
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup instant vanilla pudding mix
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoons unflavored gelatin
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

**1. For the Crust** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Process crackers and sugar in food processor until finely ground,

## Bigger Limes = Less Work

When developing our recipe for Icebox Key Lime Pie, we found the flavor of Key limes and regular supermarket limes (called Persian limes) to be almost identical in our pie recipe. But there was a big difference in squeezing time.



### KEY LIMES

We had to squeeze 40 Key limes to yield 1 cup of juice.



### PERSIAN LIMES

Just six to eight Persian limes gave us all the juice we needed.

about 30 seconds. Add melted butter in steady stream while pulsing until crumbs resemble damp sand. Sprinkle mixture into 9-inch pie plate and use bottom of dry measuring cup to press crumbs firmly into bottom and sides. Bake until fragrant and browned around edges, 12 to 14 minutes. Let cool completely.

**2. For the Filling** Process sugar and zest in clean food processor until sugar turns bright green, about 30 seconds. Add cream cheese and process until combined, about 30 seconds. Add condensed milk and pudding mix and process until smooth, about 30 seconds. Scrape down sides of bowl. Sprinkle gelatin over 2 tablespoons lime juice in small bowl and let sit until gelatin softens, about 5 minutes. Heat in microwave for 15 seconds; stir until dissolved. With processor running, pour in gelatin mixture, remaining lime juice, and vanilla and mix until thoroughly combined, about 30 seconds.

**3.** Pour filling into cooled crust, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 3 hours or up to 2 days. To serve, let pie sit at room temperature for 10 minutes before slicing.

## A Mystery of Pie History

Before Gail Borden invented sweetened condensed milk in 1856, drinking milk was a health risk, as there was no pasteurization or refrigeration for fresh milk. The shelf-stability and safety of sweetened condensed milk made it especially popular in areas like the Florida Keys, where the hot climate promoted rapid spoilage of anything perishable. Like many of our iconic foods, no one knows for sure when or by whom the first Key lime pie was made, but with canned milk in every pantry by the 1870s and an abundance of tiny Key limes throughout the area, it was only a matter of time. Most food historians trace the history of this pie back to the 1890s, but there are those—especially in the Keys—who claim the recipe is decades older.



**Why This Recipe Works** Authentic Key lime pie recipes used to be simple and uncooked—but they contained raw eggs, a no-no in modern times. We wanted to develop an eggless Key lime pie recipe as bright and custardy as the original. In lieu of using egg yolks, we found the right ratio of instant vanilla pudding, gelatin, and cream cheese to thicken our Icebox Key Lime Pie's filling into a perfect, smooth consistency. A full cup of fresh lime juice produced a pie with bracing lime flavor. Lime zest added another layer of flavor, and processing the zest with a little sugar offset its sourness and eliminated the annoying chewy bits.