

# Darcy's Apple Pie Episode

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“I’m ready. A new episode in baking!”

Darcy said across the small kitchen to her younger sister. A curly pompom of copper hair topped eleven-year-old Darcy and bobbed as she looped the apron over her head then tied it loosely behind her back.

“I’m ready to help,” proclaimed Dawn.

“What’s on our menu today, Master Baker?”

“Today’s the day to make my own version of Mom’s famous Apple Pie.

“What did you do that’s different from Mom’s recipe?” Dawn hesitantly asked. She had her light blue homemade apron on with a white flower on the long pocket across the front and was deftly pulling her long, straight blonde hair into a ponytail as she spoke.

“You’ll never guess,” Darcy answered, lowering her voice as if someone might overhear her. She looked secretive and said, “I’ve added ... a different spice.”

Dawn’s face dropped. “Oh Darcy, not again. You know what happened when you’ve done this before. There is a recipe for a reason. A tried-and-true formula for the best outcome.”

“Well, yah, but...I’ve watched the cooking shows. And flipped through the cooking magazines Mom gets. The cooks set themselves apart with a secret ingredient.”

“Right. But they don’t show the ga-jillion times they worked with that recipe before getting it unique, different, and splendid.”

“Consider this my second try at being unique, different, and splendid. Right? Come on, grab the butter, and let’s get started. Stuff for the crust goes over there. Mom always says the crust is the easy part.”

“Oh, there are so many ways this can go wrong,” Dawn muttered, reaching into the refrigerator.

The long galley kitchen was set up with a small rectangle table under the first window with a gray and white pebble-looking pattern and clear, smooth surface, typically found in the average kitchen of the 1960s. The telephone hung on the wall next to the window — a black box holding the phone receiver in the center whose end was attached to the box by a very long curled cord. Then came the tiled counter with the two-bowl white sink centered under the second window. On the other side, starting from the same dining room entry, was one medium floor-to-ceiling cabinet, a tiny counter next to a 6-burner stove, a small counter, and then the refrigerator. And that was that.

“Now,” Darcy said with ingredients, bowl, measuring cups, and spoons laid out neatly on the small table, “Welcome to Darcy & Dawn’s Kitchen Show.” Her imitation of the chef on a television cooking show was grand and pompous as she waved her whisk in the air with the introduction.

“The what?” Dawn asked. Then fell in with the idea and also bowed to the phone on the wall, noticing Darcy’s acceptance of it as the video camera in a studio.

“My assistant, Dawn Marie, will be helping me with the pie dough as I create the more important part with my secret ingredient, the apple pie filling.”

She carefully laid the whisk neatly alongside the other utensils.

“Now, to make the pie filling so it will look just like what you pour out of a can.”

Dawn looked up in surprise. “But Darcy, Mom just puts the apples on the crust, adds sugar, butter, and spices, covers it, and ‘bingo’, it's ready.”

“But I am doing it the Darcy way,” the older sister said grandly.

“First, you slice the apples...and take out the seeds and the core, of course. Then you slice them up like so...until the bowl is filled. Next, in a pot, you slowly melt the sugar and other stuff to coat the apples with.”

“Then you do the easy part, the dough for the crust.” Darcy smiled at the camera.

Turning away from the camera, Darcy mumbled to herself. “I never get this part right, no matter how many times Mom’s shown me. But it's only four ingredients!”

Dawn brought a small bowl of water over with ice cubes floating in it. “What’s that for?” Darcy asked with her face still turned away.

“All I know is that’s what Mom uses when she makes her crust,” Dawn whispered, then faced the camera, waving her hands as if presenting the bowl to the audience.

“Well folks, next we take the measured flour in the biggest bowl, (ours is yellow,) and add the butter, chopping it up with a pastry blender.”

“No, not a blender like for a milkshake,” Darcy chuckles as if with the audience, “but this handle that has small butter knife blades side by side. Or you can use two butter knives to cut up the chunks. Either way, you keep cutting until the butter is smaller than peas. Then, you sprinkle measures of ice water onto the mix and use a fork to blend it in quickly until it is all moist and forming a ball. Then break it in two for a top and bottom crust and set them on a floured cutting board like this.” Darcy dropped the balls onto the flour.

Just as Darcy, with flour up her arms and on her nose, tried to put on a good face for the imagined audience, she sneezed into the crook of her arm. And quickly darted to the sink for a quick wash and jumped back, not missing a beat. She started to roll out the dough but it was sticking to the rolling pin. Then she forced a smile for the camera, and peeled the dough off. As she smothered the rolling pin with flour and tried rolling out again, the camera/phone rang.

“Ruuuumpt, ruuumpt.”

Dawn wiped her hands on her apron and reached for the receiver. Holding the slight arch handle with the speaker in the top round end and the microphone in the bottom, she listened and nodded her head.

“Mom, it's for you!” Dawn called, walking to the dining room doorway and holding the receiver out to her mom.

“Thank you. My, you two are enterprising,” she said, accepting it and taking a seat at the end chair in the dining room. Now the cord draped from the phone box on the wall, around the kitchen table hanging about knee high, to where Mom peacefully sat having a nice chat.

When Dawn returned, she saw her older sister in a bit of a mental mess. Her big eyes had tears barely visible under loose strands of her curly hair. She was looking forlornly at the thick ‘crust’ she had rolled out and then to the concoction slowly bubbling in the pot.

The apples, were sliced, some thin like a potato chip and others more like an orange slice, all piled in the green mixing bowl— the third in the nested set of four colorful bowls.

“Ok girls, that was the call. We have one hour before we have to leave. Are you ready to put it in the oven?” Mom asked as she brought the receiver carefully back moving the cord as needed around the table and girls to its place on the wall. “Do you...need some help?” she asked gently, looking at Darcy’s crumpled look.

“Darcy looked up and started to nod, then created a fake smile and shook her head.

“We’ve got this, Mom. Right?” Darcy said looking hopefully at the younger sister.

“We are just about ready to put our pie in the oven for the one-hour baking time.”

Mom hesitated before leaving. “If you’re sure?” retreating as both girls shooed her out of the kitchen.

“I have a great idea. How about we call it Darcy’s Cobbler instead? I can move the pie crust to the 9in x 9in baking pan because it is deeper and then it will hold all of your luscious filling.”

“Great idea! Then we don’t have to worry about it overflowing or anything. Darcy & Dawn’s Cobbler, I like it.”

Dawn took the larger flattened dough that her sister had draped across the pie pan and turned it upside down letting it fall, creating the bottom layer in the square ceramic baking pan. With gentle fingers she stretched it into the corners, careful not to tear the dough.

Darcy showed the bowl of sliced apples to the camera, then dumped it into the prepared square, talking all the while. Next, Darcy brought over her pot with the thick syrup, drizzling it over the pile and pushing the remains out with a wooden spoon.

Plopping the pot in the sink and filling it with hot water to soak, she returned to the table.

With grand gestures, Darcy slid one floured hand under the remaining crust and laid it over the top like a tent. The two girls gently tore the edges making the two crusts neatly oversized squares, then squeezed the edges together and folded them under, creating a ridge.

“Last, but not least,” Darcy said holding up a fork, “air holes.” Each of the two girls had a fork dipped in flour and stabbed the new top a few times, creating the rough shape of an apple.

“Wait, one more thing.” Dawn poured a small amount of cream in the smallest blue bowl and with her fingers, added the cream over the top dabbing the crust lightly. “Now Darcy what do you want to finish it with?”

Darcy quickly mixed white sugar, cinnamon, and a pinch of cardamom together and sprinkled it evenly over the sticky top. “Done!” Darcy declared. Dawn opened the oven door and Darcy balanced the square pan, sliding it carefully into the center of the oven.

“And that, folks, is how your trusted assistant and best friend can save your bacon when you once again, take on more than you can chew.” Darcy said to the audience sure to be just beyond the camera lense imagined on the wall phone.

“Thanks for watching and we’ll see you next time on another episode of...The Darcy & Dawn’s Kitchen Show.” She followed it with, “And we’re out.”

“Dawn, I don’t know what I’d do without you. Your logic, though irritating, made the dessert edible.”

“But Darcy, I would never dream up all the things you do. We make a great team for any adventure.”

“The more impossible the better,” Darcy added feeling a little of her importance coming back.

The cobbler came out on time announced by the single ‘ding’ of the round white timer. Darcy was ready with hot pads in each hand. Dawn opened the door letting the heat out and then dropped the door all the way down. With expectations high, Darcy reached in drawing out their dessert and placed it on the cooling rack next to sink by the window, all the dishes done and put away.

“It’s a master piece,” Dawn said excitedly.

“It’s a disaster,” Darcy said with her shoulders slumped. “It’s burnt on that edge where the filling found a way out, super lumpy top where the apples are, the sugar top is a little too golden. Disaster.”

“All in the way you choose to look at it. I know what’s in it and I can’t wait for the others to try it too. You did this and because of you we get dessert tonight!”

“Time to go,” Mom called, and the girls heard the family making their way noisily down the hall to the front door.

Mom hustled into the kitchen with a flat box setting it on the empty table.

“Dawn, grab the cooling rack when your sister lifts up her creation and set it here in this box. Then Darcy, put it right in the center. I’ll grab some tea-towels to give it some padding.

“What’s going on?” Darcy asked, bewildered.

“We’re taking it with us to your Grandma’s right now. She likes to bake, and she’ll be so pleased to see what her granddaughters can do. Your cousins will be there too. I am so proud of you both. It takes practice like anything else and you two did this on your own,” she said with a gentle smile. “Let’s go.”

The girls reverently brought the ‘pie’ to the table at the end of dinner that night. To the muffled snickers and smiles of the other family members.

Grandma smiled with delight as her granddaughters cut and served the lumpy cobbler.

“This,” Darcy declared before anybody could say anything, “Is my second try of the gajillion tries we will make, while creating the Darcy & Dawn’s Apple Pie.” She bowed slightly before sliding into her chair next to Dawn.

One cousin stopped her smirking with her first bite. “Wow, this is really good!”

Another cousin had a piece of the crust in his hand eating it like a cookie. “You can make this any time.”

Surprised, Darcy took a bite and her shoulders relaxed just a bit.

“Not bad,” Dawn said dabbing her lips with a napkin after her first sugary bite. “Well done Master Baker.”

“We’ll get there. Practice, practice, practice,” Darcy said with her mouth full.

The sisters nudged each other and started to whisper about what their next culinary adventure might be.