

Perfect Pie Crust

The following are instructions for making

- 1) a basic butter crust (*pâte brisée*) for sweet and savory pies and tarts,
- 2) a butter crust with ground almonds replacing some of the flour for added flavor for sweet pies such as apple pie,
- 3) a pre-baked pie crust needed for dishes such as quiche,
- 4) a combination butter and shortening crust, and
- 5) an egg wash finish for the pie.

The instructions will yield enough dough for 1 25-cm pie with a crust top, or 2 25-cm topless pies or tarts. If you are making a tart or just a pie bottom, cut all ingredients in half.



Perfect Pie Crust

- **Prep time:** 1 hour, 15 minutes

One of the secrets to a flaky pie crust is to work with very cold butter. Cut the butter into cubes and freeze, **at least 15 minutes**, best over an hour or even overnight.

INGREDIENTS

All Butter Crust for Sweet and Savory Pies (*Pâte Brisée*)

- 325 g all-purpose flour, plus extra for rolling
- 230g unsalted butter, very-cold, cut into 13 mm cubes
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 6 to 8 T ice water

METHOD



1. Combine **flour**, **salt**, and **sugar** in a food processor; pulse to mix.

2. Add **butter** and pulse 6 to 8 times, until mixture resembles coarse meal, with pea size pieces of butter.
3. Add **ice water** 1 T at a time, pulsing until mixture just begins to clump together. If you pinch some of the crumbly dough and it holds together, it's ready. If the dough doesn't hold together, add a little more water and pulse again. Note that too much water will make the crust tough.



4. Remove dough from machine and place in a mound on a clean surface. *If you want an extra flaky crust, smooch the dough mixture into the table top with the heel of the palm of your hand a few times. This will help flatten the butter into layers between the flour which will help the resulting crust be flaky. This step is optional.*
5. Gently shape the dough mixture into two disks. Work the dough just enough to form the disks, do not over-knead. You should be able to see little bits of butter in the dough. These small chunks of butter are what will allow the resulting crust to be flaky.
6. Sprinkle a little flour around the disks. Wrap each disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least **1 hour, and up to 2 days**.
7. Remove one crust disk from the refrigerator. Let sit at room temperature for **5-10 minutes** to soften just enough to make rolling out a bit easier.
8. Roll out with a rolling pin on a lightly floured surface to a 30-cm circle; about 3 mm thick. As you roll out the dough, check if the dough is sticking to the surface below. If necessary, add a few sprinkles of flour under the dough to keep the dough from sticking.
9. Carefully place onto a 23-cm pie plate. Gently press the pie dough down so that it lines the bottom and sides of the pie plate. Use a pair of kitchen scissors to trim the dough to within 13-mm of the edge of the pie dish.
10. Add filling to the pie.
11. Roll out second disk of dough, as before. Gently place onto the top of the filling in the pie. Pinch top and bottom of dough rounds firmly together. Trim excess dough with kitchen shears, leaving a 19 mm overhang. Fold the edge of the top piece of dough over and under the edge of the bottom piece of dough, pressing together. Flute edges using thumb and forefinger or press with a fork. Score the top of the pie with four 5-cm long cuts, so that steam from the cooking pie can escape.

All Butter Crust with Almonds

Ingredients

- 260 g all-purpose flour, plus extra for rolling
- 48 g finely ground blanched almonds or almond flour
- 230 g unsalted butter, very-cold, cut into 13 mm cubes
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 heaping tsp brown sugar
- 6 to 8 T ice water, very cold

Follow directions as for the All Butter Crust Pâte Brisée, but with the above ingredients. Include the ground almonds in with the flour and the salt and sugar in step 2 above.

To Pre-Bake a Pie Crust

If your recipe calls for a **pre-baked** crust, follow all the steps above until you get to the point where it says to put in the filling. You will need to make only a half recipe if you are only doing a bottom crust. **Freeze the crust it for at least a half hour**, until chilled. This is an important step in pre-baking. Otherwise the crust will slip down the sides.



Preheat your oven to **180°C**. When the pie crust is sufficiently chilled, line the pie crust with parchment paper, wax paper, or aluminum foil. Fill at least two-thirds full with pie weights - dry beans, rice, or stainless-steel pie weights. **Bake with weights for 20 minutes**. Remove from oven, cool a few minutes and carefully remove pie weights. Poke small holes in the bottom of the pie crust with a fork and return to oven (without the weights) and cook for an **additional 10 minutes**, until the crust is golden. Cool completely before filling. You may need to tent the edges of the pie with aluminum foil when you bake your pie, to keep the edges from getting too dried out and burnt.

Combination Butter and Shortening Crust

Ingredients for one double-crust 23-cm or 25-cm pie:

- 325 g all-purpose flour
 - 1 tsp salt
 - 2 T sugar
 - 170 g unsalted butter, chilled, cut into 6 mm cubes
 - 113 g vegetable shortening)
 - 6-8 T ice water
1. Combine **flour**, **salt**, and **sugar** in a food processor; pulse to mix.
 2. Add the **butter** and pulse 4 times.
 3. Add **shortening** in small sized chunks, and pulse 4 more times. The mixture should resemble coarse cornmeal, with butter bits no bigger than peas.
 4. Sprinkle 6 T of **ice water** over flour mixture. Pulse a couple times. If you pinch some of the crumbly dough and it holds together, it's ready. If the dough doesn't hold together, keep adding water, a tablespoon at a time, pulsing once after each addition, until the mixture just begins to clump together.
 5. Remove dough from machine and place in a mound on a clean surface. Divide the dough into 2 balls and flatten each into 10-cm wide disks. Do not over-knead the dough! Dust the

disks lightly with flour, wrap each in plastic, and **refrigerate for at least an hour, or up to 2 days** before rolling out.

6. After the dough has chilled in the refrigerator for an hour, you can take it out to roll. If it is too stiff, you may need to let it sit for 5-10 minutes at room temperature before rolling. Sprinkle a little flour on a flat, clean work surface and on top of the disk of dough you intend to roll out. Using a rolling pin, apply light pressure while rolling outwards from the center of the dough. Every once in a while you may need to gently lift under the dough (a pastry scraper works great for this) to make sure it is not sticking. You have a big enough piece of dough when you place the pie tin or pie dish upside down on the dough and the dough extends by at least 5-cm all around.
7. When the dough has reached the right size, gently fold it in half. Lift up the dough and place it so that the folded edge is along the center line of the pie dish. Gently unfold. Do not stretch the dough.
 - a If you are only making a single crust pie, use a pair of kitchen scissors to trim the dough to within 13-mm of the lip of the dish. Tuck the overhang underneath itself along the edge of the pie dish. Use your fingers in a pinching motion, or the tines of a fork to crimple the edge of the pie crust.
 - b If you are making a double crust pie, roll out the second disk of dough. Gently place onto the top of the filling in the pie. Use a kitchen scissors to trim the overhang to an inch over. Fold the edge of the top piece of dough over and under the edge of the bottom piece of dough, pressing together. Finish the double crust by pressing against the edges of the pie with your finger tips or with a fork.
6. Use a sharp knife to cut vents into the top of the pie crust, so the steam has a place to escape while the pie is cooking.

Optional - Before scoring, you may want to paint the top of your crust with an egg wash (this will make a nice finish).

Egg Wash

A beautiful coating for a pie can be achieved with a simple egg wash.

- 1 T heavy cream, half and half, or milk
- 1 large egg yolk

Beat egg yolk with cream and brush on the surface of the pie with a pastry brush.