

Pastry for Pies and Tarts

Single crust, so if you are doing a double crust, double everything.

1 cup flour

1/2 tsp salt

1/3 cup + 1 T shortening (butter flavored Crisco is also great!)

2-3 T cold water.

In a bowl, combine flour and salt. Cut shortening in with a fork or pastry cutter until shortening is the size of small peas. The vegetable, you know? If the pieces are too small, then the pie crust will be tough. I don't make pie crust in my food processor for that reason. Don't whine, it seriously takes 3 minutes to cut the shortening in.

Add cold water a T (or 2 if you are doubling) at a time and fluff with a fork after each addition until it starts to come together, like this.

Now it's time to get your hands dirty. I guess there is a lame way to do it, but I don't know any lame things. Hopefully your hand won't look so weird doing this. Seriously, why are my veins so big? Bring mixture into a ball.

If it won't form a ball, add a bit more water and try again.

Form into a disc, if you are doing a double, separate and divide into 2 discs. Wrap each in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 40 minutes. I sometimes skip that step because I don't feel like waiting or I haven't planned properly and don't have time. When I do skip the step, the crust is still delicious so don't fret.

Roll out, (keep the other covered until you are ready to use it if you are doing a double crust) turning over and flouring often. Don't be scared of the flour here. If you are using a 9 inch pie plate, you want to roll it out to about 11 inches. I used to not have one of these mats but it is pretty nice to have the measurements there.

If the crust is sticking to the mat, use a spatula to lift it. I usually don't have to do that, but my house was warm today (it was like 80 degrees here) and I skipped the refrigeration step. Lift onto rolling pin and transfer to pie plate.

Trim the all but about 1/2 inch from the edges of the pie plate. If you were doing a single crust you would fold the ends in and make the edges pretty. For double crust, leave them hanging.

With a fork, poke the inside of the pie crust several times.

If you needed a pre-baked crust, this is where you would put wax paper or foil inside the crust and some pie weights or dried beans (I am not cool enough to own pie weights) and throw it in the oven at 475 for 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Leave the paper and the pie weights in place until crust is mostly cooled to prevent shrinking.

For the top, you can either roll one circle the size of your pie plate or you can do a lattice top. I did a lattice top because I thought it would be the harder of the two to explain. Roll into a 9 inch circle and cut with a pizza cutter into 1/2-3/4 inch strips.

Place half of the strips over the pie. At one end, press the strips into the bottom pie dough.

Lift half of those pieces and lay them to the back trying to keep them sealed at the one end. Slide another piece in place going the opposite direction. Bring pieces from the back forward and take the other pieces to the back. Repeat until finished. Fold bottom crust over top and seal. You can make it prettier than I did, I just didn't worry too much about it. Continue with instructions in your pie recipe.

The dough was a bit harder to work with tonight than it normally is. Like I said, it was sticking and it wanted to fall apart a little bit probably because my house was hotter than normal. Just don't get frustrated. Even if it doesn't look perfect (like mine), it will still taste delicious. And if you make it look too perfect, people will assume you bought it. You want them to know it's hand made just for them. :)

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