

Basic Pie Crust

There's a reason why they say "Easy As Pie"

Ingredients for one crust:

1/3 C. Shortening (Butter Flavor Crisco is recommended)

1 C. Flour

1/2 tsp. Salt

Cold Water

This recipe makes one crust. If you have a pie that needs a top crust or lattice work top, you will need to double this amount.

I recommend the butter-flavored Crisco sticks for a couple of reasons. One, because they are so easy to use and measure -- simply cut along the dotted lines and use. And they produce a very good tasting pie crust. (I also sometimes use the Crisco sticks instead of butter in chocolate chip cookies and have GREAT success there, too!)

In a large mixing bowl, add flour, shortening and salt.

You need to cut the shortening into the flour and salt. Ideally, a tool called a "pie crust cutter" does this best. If you don't have one, don't despair, you can use two table knives and simply cross them back and forth through the shortening.

There's a picture on the website to show you what your pie crust should look like when it's cut up enough -- small grains of shortening, mostly all the same size, approximately the size of small peas -- some people would tell you grains of rice but I think that's too finely cut up.

You will want to add ice cold water to the mixed up flour and shortening -- you do this by adding just a little (1/4 C. or less) and stirring it with a fork. If that doesn't turn out to be enough to make it all stick together, add another little splash. I can't tell you an exact amount because it will vary somewhat depending on humidity, the temperature in your room, etc.

Keep stirring small amounts of water in until it mostly sticks together. You'll be able to press it all into a ball with your hands when it's just right. [Too much water would be a mistake -- it would be tough crust and not as easy to handle or roll out.]

Roll out your ball of pie crust (or 1/2 of same if you made a double recipe) on a floured surface and fold it gently which will make it easier to lift in one piece into the pan. Once you get the gently folded crust into the pan, you can unfold it and you're all set to proceed.

The crust will overlap the pie pan when you unfold it. Trim it till it's about 1 inch wider than the pan. If this is a pie without a top crust, then fold the excess under and crimp with your fingers. If this is a pie where you'll have a top crust, wait till you get the filling in, brush the edges with water (remember, water is our pie crust “glue”) and THEN trim the excess off and crimp.

If you are making a pie where you need to pre-bake the crust, you will need to poke fork holes in the bottom to keep it from bubbling up and warping. THIS STEP IS NOT NECESSARY FOR PIES THAT YOU FILL AND BAKE IN ONE STEP, SUCH AS FRUIT PIES.

© Kathy Niemer, 2003