

Pie Crust Tutorial: From My Kitchen Cafe (www.melskitchencafe.com)



I start the process by cutting the butter into small pieces, putting it on a plate and setting it in the freezer for 10-15 minutes while I get the dry ingredients going.



Also, I fill a liquid measure with water and put some ice cubes in to start getting my water nice and icy cold.



Combine all the dry ingredients in a large bowl.



When the butter is very cold, toss it on top of the flour mixture.



Toss the butter with the flour.



Using your handy-dandy pastry blender (or two knives) start working the butter into the flour...



...until the mixture is crumbly and the butter is in about pea-sized pieces.



Measure out the ice water.



And drizzle it over the butter/flour mixture.



Using a fork, start tossing the water and flour mixture together.



Eventually I abandon the fork all together and use my hands to do the mixing. Watch the butter to make sure it isn't softening too much (especially with the body heat from your hands). If it seems to be getting soft, refrigerate the entire mixture for a few minutes.



Mix until the dough forms a shaggy mess of a ball. It shouldn't be smooth and supple, instead it should still be a bit crumbly but a pinch of dough should hold together when squeezed in your fingers. It will all come together as you roll it out.



Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface. See how it still looks a little crazy and shaggy? This goes against my personality that likes things all neat and orderly but I promise it will come together as you roll.



Begin rolling from the middle of the dough using firm, strong strokes and giving the dough a quarter turn and lift after each roll to make sure it isn't sticking.



As you continue rolling the dough becomes more smooth. Take care not to manhandle the dough too much as you roll - this can make the butter melt into the dough too much and will result in a tough crust instead of a light and flaky crust.



When you finish rolling you should still be able to see pockets of butter in the crust. It's a little hard to tell in this picture but if you look close you'll see smears and dots of butter rolled out in the crust. When that butter melts while baking it will create a steam puff of air which helps the crust be flaky and tender. Flaky and tender is good.



I like to take my pie plate and hold it over the dough to see exactly how big I need my dough circle. I always roll about 2 inches more than the diameter of my pie plate.



Carefully roll the crust around your rolling pin, trying not to curse if it rips or tears.



Gently transfer it to your pie plate and unroll it from the rolling pin.



The pie crust will probably be sitting above the bottom of the plate. Instead of stretching and pulling the crust to line the plate, gently lift the crust from the side of the plate and ease it into place. If it stretches, it will shrink in the oven while baking. Shrinking is bad.



Trim the edges of the crust to about 1/2 to 1-inch beyond the edge of the pie plate. For a single crust pie, you could fill right now and flute the edges (or flute the edges and blind bake the pie crust). I like to fold the extra overhang underneath to create an extra thick pie crust edge and then flute it with my fingers.



For a double crust pie, repeat the above steps to roll out the dough. Then gently place the top crust over the filled pie. Trim the edges about 1/2-inch past the pie plate and fold the top crust underneath the bottom crust.



Then flute the edges and bake to perfection!

Pie Crust:

*Makes 2 pie crusts (for 2 single crust pies or 1 double crust pie)

1 cup (2 sticks) very cold butter (I cut my butter into about 16 small pieces, put them on a plate and place the plate in the freezer for about 15 minutes before using in the recipe)

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/3 cup ice water, plus an additional tablespoon or two if needed

For the pie crust:

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, and salt. Mix to blend. Scatter the butter pieces across the flour mixture and using a pastry cutter or two knives, work the butter into the flour until the pieces of butter are pea-sized and the mixture is coarse and crumbly. Throughout this process, the butter should stay very cold and firm. If you notice the butter is softening too much, refrigerate the mixture for about 10 minutes before continuing, although this shouldn't be a problem if you work quickly. Drizzle the cold water over the flour/butter mixture, and with a fork, toss the flour and water lightly to combine. The dough should start to pull together in a floury mass of dough. Add a tablespoon of cold water additionally at a time if the dough is too dry. The dough should not resemble a sugar cookie dough – in fact, it may still be a bit crumbly when you start to roll it out, but it will come together as you roll.