



New Mexico



## 4-H Pastry & Pies Supplement

To Accompany the NM 4-H Pastry & Pies Project (100.E-85)



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We use the word "pie" in many common expressions in our everyday speech, such as "sweet as pie," "pie in the sky," "eating humble pie," "as American as apple pie," and "easy as pie." No doubt, Americans love their pies whether they are fruit, cream or custard filled, tarts, turnovers, empanadas, hand-held pies, fried pies, tarts, crostatas, galettes, slab pies, rustic pies, cobblers, crisps, crumbles, apple dumplings, whoopie pies, or even savory pies like chicken pot pie or quiche!! No wonder some people say they only like two kinds of pie-----hot or cold!

The 4-H Pastry and Pies project book introduces members to the art of making flaky pastry or pie crust -----a stiff dough made of basic ingredients such as flour, salt, some form of fat, and a small amount of liquid. Sugar, lemon or lime zest, eggs, vinegar and herbs or spices may also be added to other pastry recipes. Pastry can serve as the base for many wonderful fillings that serve as snacks, appetizers, main dishes or desserts.

**Making good pastry requires learning and practicing a few basic rules.**

- ✓ Keep Cool – All the ingredients and utensils, even your hands, should be cool when making pastry.
- ✓ Choose a standard recipe which fits the size of pan you will use and the type of pie you are making.
- ✓ Most fruit pies require a double, unbaked pie crust. A baked, single crust is used for cream pies and an unbaked, single crust pastry is used for custard pies such as pumpkin, pecan and chess pie.
- ✓ Be sure to measure accurately, using the correct tools and techniques.
- ✓ The less handling involved in making pastry, the more tender the pastry. High quality pastry or pie crust should be flaky and tender.



## Making Pastry for Pies

For a **single crust pastry** used in making cream pies, such as chocolate or coconut cream, turn the edge of the pastry under and form an attractive border with the tines of a fork or with a pinch of pastry between the thumb and forefinger. This process is known as “fluting” or “crimping” the pastry. Prick the unbaked pie shell liberally with a fork on the bottom and sides to prevent “bubbling” and shrinkage during baking. Bake the pie shell in a preheated 425 degrees F. oven until lightly browned on the edges, approximately 10 minutes. Cool before filling with cream pie filling.

This pre-baking process is called “**blind baking**”, which is partially, or sometimes completely, baking the pie shell before adding the filling.



**TIP:** To prevent shrinkage during baking you may also want to line the unbaked pie shell with parchment paper or aluminum foil and weight it down with something so that the bottom doesn't puff and the sides don't shrink. You can purchase special pie weights for this job, but you can also just use dry beans or raw short-grain rice.

Once the pie shell is set — and you'll know this because the edges will turn golden — you remove the weights and let the pastry bake a little longer on its own. For a **partially-baked crust**, you want the bottom to look dry and flakey, but still pale. For a **fully-baked crust**, look for the bottom to turn a light golden brown. The whole process won't take more than 15 or 20 minutes.

For a **custard pie**, such as pecan, chess or pumpkin, follow the same steps for a single crust pastry, but leave the pastry unbaked. It will be filled with the raw custard ingredients before baking.

For a **double crust pie**, roll the second ball of dough as you did the lower pastry. Before transferring this top pastry to the pie, cut some vent holes using a sharp knife, cookie cutter or other tool to allow steam to escape during baking. Fill the bottom pastry shell with the prepared pie filling before placing the top pastry over the rolling pin and gently lay it on the filled pie, centering as well as possible. Trim long, overhanging pieces of dough as before. Lap the top pastry edge over the bottom pastry edge and press together. Form an attractive edge as for a single crust pastry. Bake as directed in recipe.



## Never Fail Pie Crust

3 cups all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon salt

1 ¼ cups vegetable shortening, cubed

1 large egg

5-6 tablespoons cold water

1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar

Combine the flour and salt in a large mixing bowl. Add in the shortening. Using a pastry blender, gradually cut the shortening into the flour until the texture is the size of small peas.

In a small bowl, lightly beat the egg with a fork, then add the water and vinegar. Stir the mixture together until just combined. Form the dough into two balls, then slightly flatten with hands. Wrap in plastic wrap or place in a large sealable plastic bag to chill 20 to 30 minutes.

Remove the dough from the bag and place on a lightly floured surface. With a lightly floured rolling pin, begin rolling the dough from the center, outward to achieve the desired thickness and size to fit the chosen pie plate. Add flour to the rolling pin and surface as needed to prevent the dough from sticking.



Loosen the edge of the pastry and fold in fourths to transfer to the pie plate or loosely drape over the rolling pin to transfer the pastry. Using your hand, lightly press the pastry so that it fits inside the pie plate and overlaps the edge or rim. Evenly trim pastry leaving a 1" overhang. Fold under at rim of pie plate and crimp for a single crust pastry. For a double crust pie, add filling, roll out another round of pastry to the desired size. Cut vents in the pastry before placing evenly over the filling. Fold under top and bottom pastry together and crimp as desired before baking.

Bake at 400 to 425 degrees F as directed in pie recipe.

Makes enough pastry for one double crust pie or two single crust pies.

# Perfect Pie Dough

Makes enough for an 8 or 10-inch single crust pie; double recipe for a two-crust pie. For decorative garnishes, roll out scraps; cut with small cutters and bake.

## Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

6 Tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

3 Tablespoons cold vegetable shortening

4 Tablespoons ice water

**By hand:** In bowl, mix flour, sugar and salt. With pastry blender, cut in butter and shortening until coarse crumbs form. Drizzle in water, tossing with fork, until dough holds together. Gather into ball; flatten into 1/2 inch thick disk. (For Double Batch Pie Dough, shape into 2 disks.) Wrap in plastic wrap; chill 1 hour (if longer, soften slightly).

**In food processor (if using):** Process flour, sugar and salt just until combined. Add butter and shortening; pulse 8 to 10 times, until coarse crumbs form. Drizzle in water; pulse 4 or 5 times until dough starts to clump. Turn out onto floured work surface; press into ball; flatten into a 1/2 inch thick disk; wrap in plastic wrap and chill for at least 1 hour.

**Partially baked pie shell:** On floured surface, roll dough into 12 to 14-inch round. Roll dough over rolling pin; unroll into 9-inch pie dish; gently press into dish. Evenly trim dough 1 1/2 inches from rim of pie dish. Fold overhang under; crimp or flute as desired.

Place oven rack in lowest position; preheat oven to 400 F. With fork, prick bottom and sides of shell. Line with foil; fill with pie weights, uncooked rice or dried beans. Bake 15 minutes, remove foil and weights. Bake 5 minutes, without browning, until dry and slightly puffed. Let cool on rack.

**Fully baked pie shell:** Prepare partially baked shell, through removing foil and weights. Bake 8 to 10 minutes, until lightly golden. Let cool.

## Leftover Pastry Ideas

Use the leftover pastry trimmed from making a pie to use for creating quick snacks, appetizers, or decorative pastry designs placed on small tarts or around the edges of single crust pies. Bake the following treats on a baking sheet in a 400° F oven for 10-15 minutes or until lightly browned.

- ✓ Form pastry into a ball and roll out or pat into a circle. Lightly brush dough with butter, sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar and bake for a sweet treat.
- ✓ Bake plain trimmings then sprinkle with grated cheese after removing from the oven.
- ✓ Sprinkle trimmings lightly with salt for a homemade cracker.
- ✓ **Create Hidden Treasures** patting small amounts of pastry into a thin circle and wrapping around one of the following fillings:

**Maraschino cherries** (drain well and pat dry with a paper towel)

**Mint-flavored chocolate pieces or "kisses"**

**Pineapple chunk** (drain well and pat dry with a paper towel)

**Pecan filling:**

1/4 cup chopped pecans      2 tablespoons packed brown sugar

1 Tablespoon butter      1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Form into tiny balls. Be sure pastry is wrapped around filling and sealed well.

Bake 10-15 minutes at 425° F until lightly browned. Roll immediately in powdered sugar.



# Creative Pie Ideas

Search recipe books and websites, use Pinterest, or simply use your computer to search for "pies" and you will find lots of really great ideas!!

