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Old-Fashioned Flaky Pie Dough Recipe

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PRINTER-FRIENDLY VERSION



[Photographs: Vicky Wasik. Video: Serious Eats]

This is the sort of recipe pastry chefs tend to favor, but it doesn't require any fancy ingredients, equipment, or training. Just smash some cold butter in a bowl of flour, stir in a bit of water, roll it out, and fold it over a few times. It's essentially a streamlined blitz, making an easy layered dough that's supple but strong. That means it won't slump out of shape in the oven, so it can support all types of complicated decorative techniques, but it's wonderfully buttery, so it always turns out flaky and

tender, too.

In summer months, warm pantry staples and equipment will raise the temperature of pie dough, causing the butter to melt. If it's warmer than 73°F (23°C) in your kitchen, a few simple precautions will keep your dough happy and cool; more [here](#).

How to Make a Flaky, Old-Fashioned Pie Crust



Why It Works

- All-purpose flour gives the dough strength to hold its shape in the oven, preserving any sort of decorative design.
- A blitz-style ratio of flour to butter creates a dough that's pliable but strong, making cracks and tears a thing of the past.
- One round of folding provides eight major layers with minimal fuss.
- Refrigerating the dough *after* shaping ensures it's fully chilled and relaxed, preserving its flakes in the oven.

READ THE WHOLE STORY

YIELD:
Makes 2
single- or 1
double-
crusted 9-
inch pie
(regular or
deep-dish)

**ACTIVE
TIME:**
25 minutes

**TOTAL
TIME:**
2 1/2 hours

RATED:
★★★★★

TEXT ONLY



Ingredients Directions

8 ounces all-purpose flour (1 2/3 cups; 225g), plus more for dusting

1/2 ounce sugar (1 tablespoon; 15g)

1. **For the Dough:** Whisk flour, sugar, and salt together in a medium bowl. Cut butter into 1/2-inch cubes (this size is important, as smaller pieces will melt too fast) and toss with flour mixture to break up the pieces. With your fingertips, smash each cube flat—that's it! No



TECHNIQUES

Don't Blame the Humidity:
How "Room Temperature"
Can Ruin a Pie Dough

1 teaspoon (4g)
Diamond Crystal
kosher salt; for table
salt, use half as much
by volume or use the
same weight

8 ounces unsalted
butter (2 sticks; 225g),
cold

4 ounces cold tap
water (1/2 cup; 115g)

rubbing or cutting. Stir in water, then knead
dough against the sides of the bowl until it comes
together in a shaggy ball. Dough temperature
should register between 65 and 70°F (18 and
21°C); if not, refrigerate briefly before rolling and
folding (see note above).

- 2. Make the Layers:** On a generously floured work
surface, roll dough into a roughly 10- by 15-inch
rectangle. Fold the 10-inch sides to the center,
then close the newly formed packet like a book.
Fold in half once more, bringing the short sides
together to create a thick block. Divide in half
with a sharp knife or bench scraper. Dough
temperature should still be somewhere between
65 and 70°F (18 and 21°C); if not, refrigerate
briefly before proceeding (see note above).
- 3. For Single-Crusted Pies:** Using as much flour as
needed, roll one piece into a 14-inch circle and
drape across a 9-inch pie plate; it will be super
easy to lift by hand. Dust off excess flour with a
pastry brush, using it to nestle dough into the
very corners of the pan. With scissors or kitchen
shears, trim the edge so that it overhangs by 1
1/4 inches all around. Fold overhang over itself to
create a thick border that sits atop the rim of the
pan. Crimp or shape crust as desired. Repeat with
remaining dough. Wrap with plastic and
refrigerate at least 2 hours and up to overnight.
Use as directed in your favorite recipe.
- 4. For a Double-Crusted Pie:** Using as much flour as
needed, roll one piece into a 14-inch circle and
drape across a 9-inch pie plate; it will be super
easy to lift by hand. Dust off excess flour with a
pastry brush, using it to nestle dough into the
very corners of the pan. With scissors or kitchen
shears, trim the edge so that it overhangs by 1
inch all around. For a solid top crust, roll
remaining dough as before, or roll into a 9- by 15-
inch rectangle for a lattice-top pie. Transfer the
entire sheet, uncut, to a baking sheet or
parchment-lined cutting board. (The parchment
will prevent dough from absorbing any savory
odors from the board.) Wrap both portions in
plastic and refrigerate at least 2 hours and up to
overnight. Use as directed in your favorite recipe.
- 5. For a Blind-Baked Pie:** Adjust oven rack to lower-
middle position and preheat to 350°F (177°C).

Line chilled pie shell with a large sheet of aluminum foil, pressing so it conforms to the curves of the plate (a second sheet of aluminum may be needed for full coverage). Fill to the brim with sugar, transfer to a half sheet pan, and bake until fully set and golden around the edges, 60 to 75 minutes. Fold long sides of foil toward the middle, gather short sides, and use both hands to carefully transfer sugar to a heat-safe bowl. Let sugar cool to room temperature. If needed, continue baking crust a few minutes more to brown along the bottom. A full explanation of this process can be found [here](#).



Special Equipment

Rolling pin, 9-inch pie plate (preferably tempered glass; see note below), **pastry brush**



Glass Bakeware Pie Plate/Dish 9 Inch Round Clear, Microwave, Oven Freezer, Dishwasher Safe [4-Pack] - Bundled with Cloth

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Notes

Compared to stoneware or heavy enameled ceramic, **tempered-glass** pie plates conduct heat quickly and evenly, so the crust bakes up light and crisp, never greasy or soft.

When room temperature exceeds 74°F, kitchen equipment and pantry staples will act as a heat source to the butter, creating a sticky dough. If it's warm in your kitchen, **take these proactive steps to manage your dough temperature**.

This Recipe Appears In

How to Bake a Pie With Frozen Fruit

2 Easy Pie Crusts, the BraveTart and Food Lab Ways

How to Freeze and Thaw a Fresh-Fruit Pie

Don't Blame the Humidity: How "Room Temperature" Can Ruin a Pie Dough

How to Choose the Right Pie Pan (Hint: Cheaper Is Better)

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Beautiful, Flaky Pie Crust the Old-Fashioned Way



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CIA-trained baking nerd, prodigal food writer, and James Beard Award–nominated **pastry wizard**. Once upon a time, Stella cashed out her life savings to attend language school in Tokyo so she could read the secret menu at her favorite sushi joint. Later, *Food & Wine* cited that compulsive dedication in naming her one of **America's Best New Pastry Chefs**. When not in the kitchen, Stella spends most of her time polishing *Star Trek* quotes, playing video games, and waiting for the arrival of her first cookbook, *BraveTart: Iconic American Desserts*, available now.



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