

# Endlessly Adaptable Quiche

Prep: 10 mins

Cook: 35 mins

Total: 45 mins

Servings: 8 servings

Yield: 1 9-inch quiche

Quiche is the iconic cafe breakfast with a thousand faces; the cheap, filling, make-ahead, reheatable hero of coffee shop menus everywhere. Quiche is so ubiquitous, in fact, that it's easy to forget just how delicious, customizable, and simple it is to make. Read on to learn how to make quiche exactly the way you want to make it.

## The (Not-Very-Clear) History of Quiche

As familiar as quiche is, we know relatively little about its origins. The Larousse Gastronomique (the Bible of classical French cuisine) dates it to the 16th Century. The Oxford Companion to Food places it later, around the start of the 19th Century. Of course, quiche almost certainly existed in some form or other long before it was ever documented.

## Is Quiche French or German?

It's complicated. Quiche comes from the Alsace-Lorraine region in what is now France. However, the region was part of Germany before the mid-17th Century, and has flip-flopped between German and French rule several times since then.<sup>1</sup>

The word "quiche" is probably derived from the German kuchen, which can be used to refer to a host of foods, from cake to pie to flan. It may be more technically accurate to say that quiche hails from Germany, but culturally, quiche has been lovingly stewarded and adapted by the French. Foods are no respecters of borders, as quiche so clearly illustrates.

## The Scoop On Quiche Lorraine

Your brain may have perked up at the sight of "Lorraine" in Alsace-Lorraine. Made with eggs, cream, bacon, and sometimes Gruyère, quiche Lorraine is the best known quiche of all. The addition of cheese is controversial, with purists insisting that cheese is usually not included in France...except sometimes it is.

Henri Paul Pellaprat's version of quiche Lorraine in his "Great Book of French Cuisine" includes cubed Gruyère or Emmentaler. Julia Child's version in "Mastering the Art of French Cooking" does not. According to Alan Davidson, author of the "Oxford Companion to Food," the earliest

quiches were just cream or milk and eggs in a crust, making the dish a protein-rich food that could be eaten by the religious on meatless holy days. So, no cheese but also no bacon.

Taking all this into account, the decision to add cheese to this iconic quiche should be based on whether you like cheese in quiche or not. Maybe just don't invite the purists over for brunch.

## What's the Secret to a Great Quiche?

The good news is that the answer depends on what you like in a quiche, but there are three key components that make a truly eggcellent quiche (sorry, not sorry).

1. A buttery, crisp crust. The best quiches have a sturdy, crisp crust, which means blind baking (also called par-baking) is in order. You can absolutely bake a quiche without blind baking the crust beforehand, but the very best quiches get the blind baking treatment.
2. A creamy, custardy center. Quiche is just a savory custard in a crust. As with all custards, quiche should be baked just until the outside edge is firm, but the very center still jiggles slightly. There is a difference between a jiggle and a slosh, and if you're new to quiche-making it can be tricky to tell which is which. This is where an instant-read thermometer comes in handy. Test the temperature in the center of the quiche. You're looking for 160 to 165 F.
3. Flavorful mix-ins. Quiche is the perfect blank canvas for all kinds of additions, but there are a few important things to keep in mind when choosing what to add to your custom quiche. Vegetable and meat add-ins should always be cooked, seasoned to taste, and cut into bite-sized pieces (or even a bit smaller than that) for the best flavor and texture. Basically, unless it's something you'd want to eat raw, it needs to be cooked first!

Now that we've got the basics down, let's talk about how to achieve the quiche of your dreams.

## How To Make a Custardy Quiche

A custardy quiche is one that has barely set. It is very creamy and has a slight jiggle to it. If you love ultra-creamy custards such as *crème brûlée* or *chawanmushi*, this is the quiche for you.

To achieve a custardy quiche, your ratio of eggs to milk or cream should be low, with as few as 3 large eggs to 2 cups dairy. For the most luxurious quiche, try three eggs with two cups heavy cream. For a quiche that is still custardy but not quite so rich, use three eggs with two cups half-and-half or milk.

## How To Make an Eggy Quiche

You might be thinking, aren't all quiches eggy? Well, yes, but it's a spectrum. An eggy quiche is firmer and, well, eggier than a custardy quiche. If you prefer your scrambles on the dry side, this is the quiche style for you.

An eggy quiche should have a higher ratio of eggs to dairy. Use four to six eggs and anywhere from one to two cups of dairy, knowing that less dairy and more eggs will yield a firmer-set quiche full of egg flavor.

# How To Make a "Fully Loaded" Quiche

This is the kind of quiche you should make if you're more interested in the mix-ins than what binds them together (or you have a bunch of leftovers to use up).

Use at least one cup and up to one and one half cups of your favorite mix-ins for a quiche that is full of texture and flavor. Make sure your mix-ins are chopped or cut into small pieces so they will get evenly dispersed throughout the quiche. This will also make slicing and eating easier. Adding more than one and one half cups of mix-ins is possible, but your quiche slices will start to lack structural integrity.

## The Best Mix-Ins for Quiche

Quiche can handle a huge variety of mix-ins, but in general, stick to cooked meats and vegetables. When it comes to meat, diced ham, crumbled crisp-cooked bacon, browned sausage, diced cooked chicken or turkey, or smoked or canned fish are all good choices.

For vegetables, the sky (or your crisper) is really the limit. Almost any cooked vegetable will work in quiche. Sautéed onions, shallots, or leeks; sautéed or roasted mushrooms; roasted winter squash; blistered cherry tomatoes; sautéed greens (drained of excess liquid); cooked broccoli or asparagus; and even roasted garlic are all great options.

Leftover cooked vegetables are a fantastic option for quiche since most of the prep work has already been done. Just make sure any juicy vegetables are well drained.

## The Best Crust for Quiche

Any plain pie crust will work for quiche, whether homemade or store-bought. If you eat quiche in France, the crust will be a *pâte brisée*, which is not flaky like American-style pie crusts, but more crumbly like shortbread. However, use whatever kind of crust you prefer.

To avoid a soggy bottom, blind bake the crust before adding the filling and baking the quiche. But you can bake a quiche without blind baking the crust and the results will still be good (just less crisp and more prone to sogginess as it sits).

## Tip

If you are using homemade pie dough but prefer not to blind bake it, after rolling it out and fitting it into your pie pan, refrigerate it for 30 minutes to 1 hour before filling and baking.

These are some excellent crust recipes and resources:

- [Buttery Flaky Pie Crust](#)
- [Shortcrust Pastry](#)
- [Vodka Pie Crust](#)
- [Tips for Making Perfect Pie Crust](#)

## The Best Cheeses for Quiche

Melty or soft cheeses are best for quiche. Think shredded Cheddar, Swiss or gruyère, mild gouda, pepper jack, low-moisture mozzarella, and fontina. Some crumbly cheeses are also excellent, like fresh goat cheese (chèvre) and feta. Generally, very hard cheeses are not the best, as they won't provide that sought-after cheese pull effect, but spiking a milder melty cheese with a bit of super-flavorful hard cheese like Parmigiano-Reggiano or pecorino is a great way to have it all.

While it may be tempting to add chunks of a triple cream cheese like Saint André, I don't recommend it. These types of cheeses are so rich that the fat often separates out and becomes oily during cooking. Reserve those cheeses for the cheese board.

## How To Serve Quiche

Quiche can be served warm but it is also delicious at room temperature. So if you're serving brunch and are worried about having everything ready at the same time, make the quiche a little bit ahead of time and don't stress about serving it piping hot. Just don't let quiche sit at room temperature for more than two and a half hours for food safety reasons.

Serve quiche with a simple green salad, fresh fruit, bacon or sausage, and mimosas for a memorable brunch or light lunch.

## Make It Ahead

Almost all components of a quiche can be prepared ahead of time.

- The crust can be baked up to 5 days ahead
- The filling can be mixed together and refrigerated for up to 3 days (wait to add the mix-ins until right before baking)
- Any mix-ins can be cooked ahead of time
- Cheese can be grated
- The whole quiche can be frozen unbaked or baked
- Quiche can be baked, refrigerated for up to 3 days, and reheated in a 350 F oven right before serving. Quiche is remarkably resilient.

## Ingredients

- 1 pie crust, homemade or store-bought, preferably blind baked (see blind baking instructions below the recipe)
- 3 to 6 large eggs
- 1 to 2 cups milk, half-and-half, or heavy cream or a combination
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 to 1 1/2 cups diced meat, cooked vegetables, or a combination
- 1/2 to 1 cup (2 to 4 ounces) shredded or crumbled cheese

## Steps to Make It

NOTE: If you use the maximum amounts of eggs (6) and milk or cream (2 cups), you will need to use a deep dish crust in order to contain all the filling, and the baking time will be longer. Start checking for doneness after 40 minutes of baking, then bake in 10-minute increments until done. Alternatively, bake the mixture in two regular crusts.

1. Gather the ingredients. Preheat the oven to 375 F.
2. Whisk together the eggs, milk or cream, salt, and pepper in a medium bowl until well combined. For a custardy quiche, use 3 eggs and 2 cups of dairy. For an eggy quiche, use 4 to 6 eggs and 1 cup of dairy.
3. Scatter the meat and/or vegetables and the cheese over the bottom of the crust.
4. Pour the egg mixture into the crust. Place the pie pan on a rimmed baking sheet to make it easier to move in and out of the oven.
5. Bake the quiche until it has started to brown on top and the very center of the quiche jiggles slightly, 35 to 40 minutes.
6. Let cool for 10 minutes before slicing.

## How to Store and Freeze Quiche

Refrigerate leftovers tightly covered for up to 5 days. Leftovers are best reheated in a 350 F oven, toaster oven, or air fryer (for an air fryer, use 325 F), but they can also be microwaved if you're in a hurry.

A whole quiche can be frozen before or after baking for up to 3 months. To freeze before baking, carefully place the quiche on a baking sheet and set in a flat space in your freezer. Freeze until solid, then wrap tightly in multiple layers of plastic wrap or plastic wrap and a zip-top freezer bag. To bake, do not thaw first. Bake as directed, adding 15 to 20 minutes to the baking time. For frozen quiche, a metal pie pan is preferable as glass or ceramic pans may crack when taken from very cold to very hot temperatures.

To freeze after baking, allow the quiche to cool to room temperature. Wrap tightly and freeze. To reheat, do not thaw. Bake until heated through (the internal temperature should reach at least 165 F), about 25 minutes. If the top is browning too fast but the interior is not fully reheated, cover with foil.

## How To Blind Bake a Pie Crust

1. Once your preferred dough is nicely situated in your pie pan (here are some crimping tips), refrigerate it for one hour. Store bought pie crusts are more resilient than homemade ones, so you can cut the time to 30 minutes for store-bought crusts.
2. Place a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 400 F.
3. Line your chilled pie crust with parchment paper. To make it easier for the stiff parchment paper to conform to the shape of the dough in the pie pan, crumple up the parchment paper then uncrumple it and lay it on top of the dough.
4. Fill the pie crust all the way to the top with pie weights or dried beans. Shift the parchment paper around and press gently on the weights or beans to make sure you're getting into the corners.
5. Bake the crust until the edges are starting to brown, about 15 minutes.
6. Carefully use the overhanging parchment paper like a sling and lift it up remove all the pie weights. Place the parchment sling and pie weights on a sheet pan to cool.
7. Prick the bottom and sides of the chilled crust all over with the tines of a fork. This prevents it from bubbling
8. Return the pie crust to the oven and bake until the bottom of the crust is dry to the touch and barely starting to brown, about 10 minutes.
9. Let the crust cool for 10 minutes before filling.