

PIE DOUGH

If you are going to make homemade piecrust, our preference for baking is a glass pie pan. Glass evenly distributes heat and facilitates a crisp, flaky crust. The Deans never add sugar to our dough because we like the contrast of savory crust and sweet filing.

INGREDIENTS

MAKES ONE 9-inch pie crust

1 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1 1/2 sticks (6 ounces) unsalted butter, cold, cut into 4 pieces

3 to 4 tablespoons ice water

Preheat the oven to 450°F.

Using a food processor or standing mixer, beat the flour with the cold butter until large, pea-size lumps form.

Now, begin to add the ice water 1 tablespoon at a time, until the dough just begins to come together. Do not wait until a ball forms or the dough will be tough. Turn off the mixer and reach in the bowl to pinch some dough together.

If it holds together, the dough is finished.

Transfer the dough to a large sheet of wax paper and gather up the sides, pushing the dough into a ball. Place the wax-paper-covered ball in the freezer while you make the pie filling.

Roll out the chilled dough between 2 pieces of wax paper until the dough is two inches larger than your pie pan, roughly 12 inches in diameter. Peel one piece of waxed paper off the dough and flip the dough into the pie pan; remove the top layer of wax paper. Lightly press the dough into the pan and crimp the edges. Do not worry if the edges are not perfect - this is a homemade pie and should look like one.

To partially bake the piecrust: Put a fresh layer of wax paper on top of the dough and fill with 1 1/2 cups dried beans, raw rice, or pie weights. Bake for 10 minutes, then remove the paper and weights and poke the bottom of the crust with a fork several times. Return the piecrust to the oven for another 8 minutes for a partially cooked pie shell.

(For a fully cooked pie shell, return to the oven for 16 minutes.)