

# How to Make Quick & Easy Pies

## The Perfect Crust

There are tricks to making perfect pie crusts. The first is maintaining the correct balance of ingredients and the second is temperature.

Pie crusts are a mixture of flour, fat, and water. The best recipes seem to have a common ratio of these ingredients: 1/4 cup water to 1/2 cup fat to 2 1/2 cups flour. (The flour should be measured by spooning the flour into the measure, not scooping it. Scooping packs the flour and overloads the formula.) Add a teaspoon of salt and you have a recipe for a double crust.

For the fat, you can use either butter or shortening or a combination. (Butter is 15% water so cut back slightly on the water when using butter—though the ratio is forgiving enough that you probably won't notice the difference.) If you are making more than one pie, just change the amounts but keep the same proportions.

Temperature may be even more important than balance—especially if you are using butter. The trick is to keep the butter and the dough cold enough that the butter pieces remain intact. If it gets too warm, it melts and saturates the flour. (The same thing happens with shortening but the melting temperature of shortening is higher.) It's the little pieces of butter that makes the crust flaky. As the butter heats in baking, little pockets of steam are formed from the butter nodules.

To keep your dough cold, use only the coldest butter and water. Then refrigerate the dough for an hour before forming the pie. If making multiple pies, take only enough dough from the refrigerator for one pie keeping the rest cold until you are ready to for it.

## My Favorite Apple Pie

9-inch double crust

1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup Gold Medal® all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
5 cups thinly sliced peeled apples (5 small)

1 large egg white  
1 tablespoon water  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
3 tablespoons granulated sugar

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

1. Prepare and press the pie crust into a deep-dish pie pan setting aside the dough for the top crust. Trim the crust. Do not bake the crust.
2. In a large bowl, mix the apples, sugar, flour, and spices together until apples are coated. Scrape the apple mixture into the unbaked pie shell.
3. Roll out the top crust. Place the top crust over the pie. Trim the crust and seal the two crusts with the tines of a fork. Poke some holes with your fork in the top crust to release steam while baking.
4. Mix the egg white, water and 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon together. Brush the mixture over the top of the pie. Mix the cinnamon with the granulated sugar and sprinkle over the top of the pie.
5. Cover the edges of the pie with aluminum foil to keep it from burning or use a pie crust shield. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes or until the pie is bubbly and the crust is golden.



## Fresh Strawberry Pie

- 1 9-inch pastry pie crust (homemade or store bought)
- 1 pint of fresh strawberries, sliced
- 1 tub of store bought strawberry glaze
- 1 aerosol can of whipped cream

Before you begin, thaw the store bought pie crust and preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

1. Prick the crust with a fork to allow steam to escape and bake it for eight to ten minutes at 450 degrees or until it starts to brown.
2. While the crust is baking, wash and slice the berries. Pick out the best berries. A strawberry slicer will make nice uniform slices and will be quicker. You will need two cups of sliced strawberries.
3. Spread the slices evenly in the baked crust.
4. Spread the pre-made glaze over the berries to fill the pie. Refrigerate the pie so that it is well-chilled. Just before serving, garnish it with whipped cream from the can.

## Easy Cream Peach Pie

- 1 (9-inch) pastry pie crust (baked and cooled)
- 1 lb cream cheese filling (1/2 tube)
- 1 (16 oz.) can peach slices (drained)
- or 2 cups fresh peaches, peeled and sliced
- whipped cream

Spread a layer of sliced peaches on the bottom of the cooked crust. Spread cream cheese filling over the peaches. Chill until ready to serve. Top with whipped cream before serving.

## Quick Fruit Cream Pies

### Step 1: Make the crust

For most folks, the crust is the intimidating part. But it can be super easy: use a pie crust mix. Then all you do add water and roll it out. Roll it 1/8 to 3/16-inch thick. Roll it round and larger than the pie pan. Lay the pie pan over the crust to measure the size. If you have an inch margin all around your pan, it's large enough.

Gently fold the crust in half and then in half again and then lift it to the pie pan. Unfold the crust to line the pie pan. Use your finger to form a decorative edge with the extra dough at the rim of the pan . . . or simply trim the excess dough and press the edges with a fork to make a little lined pattern.

Bake the crust at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes or until lightly golden brown. If using a pie crust shield bake for 6 minutes with the shield on and 6 minutes with the shield off.

### Step 2: Make the filling

It can take time to peel, core, and slice your fruit. An apple peeler reduces the time dramatically. But you can always use a prepared filling. Use two cans for a deep dish pie and one for a standard pie. You can make the filling special by adding cranberries to an apple filling and pecan pieces to a peach pie.

### Step 3: Add whipped cream

Buy a can of whipped cream from the grocery store or make your own and spread it over the top of your pie.