



Focus: Strength

Project: Culinary Arts – Pie Crusts

Define Objective:

Learn how to make a pie crust from scratch. This project is to learn the basics of making a pie crust. A separate project sheet is used to learn how to make pie fillings.

_____ Prepare an empty pie shell for your family or friends. You may ask a parent or friend to help you fill the pie with a simple pie filling.

_____ Prepare a two crust pie for your family or friends. You may ask a parent or friend to help you fill the pie with your favorite fruit filling before baking .

Discovery:

- Use shiny pans and cookie sheets, which reflect heat, for golden, delicate and tender crusts
- Make sure the oven rack is positioned in the center of the oven before beginning to preheat.
- The best ingredients for a pie crust include flour, salt, vegetable shortening, and water. Vegetable shortening provides the best texture for a pie crust. However, some people have substituted oil for shortening because they want to avoid hydrogenated fats. Be aware that if you make this substitution, you will get a mealy rather than a flaky pie crust.
- First step – use a fork to mix dry ingredients together.
- Second step – Cut the flour into the flour/salt mixture with a pastry blender. Continue to cut until the pieces are about the size of small split peas.
- Add water at a very slow rate. Continue to toss the mixture with a fork. Maintain a gentle mixing action to avoid unnecessary gluten development.
- Enough water has been added when the dough forms a ball. Mixing is done only until the dough holds together.
- The dough is turned out onto a piece of wax paper then the wax paper-wrapped ball of dough is worked very quickly and lightly with the hands until the dough holds together very well. This operation needs to be done quickly and lightly.

- Let the dough rest while rubbing a light coating of flour into a pasty cloth (the cloth should feel like suede when it has enough flour)
- Cover the rolling pin with its stocking and roll over pastry cloth (Avoid excessive flour on pastry cloth or sock)
- Place dough directly on floured cloth. Work the dough into a thick round disc about 4 inches in diameter. Use hands to define the edge of the dough disc and flatten the ball. Be sure there are no cracks in the dough around the edge.
- Use the rolling pin to roll the dough into a circle large enough to fit into the pie plate and extend the edge at least ½ inches. The rolling motion should be light and quick so that you do not stretch the gluten (stretched gluten results in excessive shrinkage during baking)
- A crust is thin enough when only a small imprint remains when the crust is touched moderately lightly with a finger. A thick crust can easily be rolled thinner. There is no satisfactory remedy for a crust that has been rolled too thin.
- Transfer the crust from the cloth to the pie plate without stretching or tearing. Gently fold the dough in half and then in half again. Carefully unfold the dough into the pie plate. Be careful to not stretch the dough as you fit it in the pan.
- Use a pair of kitchen shears to trim the crust ½ inch beyond the edge
- Fold the overhanging crust under and stand the crust upright on the flat rim of the pie plate. The edge can be trimmed to suit individual preference. One simple edging is done by using the thumb and index finger of the right hand as a pattern and the index finger of the left hand as a press.
- Pie crusts baked without a filling will tend to blister badly and form large air pockets. To avoid these problems, unfilled pie crusts can be pricked with a table fork in a number of places.
- Follow directions carefully for making pie fillings that will be poured into an unbaked crust.
- Clean your dishes and work area after you are finished.

Practice and Evaluate: Record what you learned. What do you want to remember for your next attempt?

Skill Practice:

Food Item	To Whom Served	Hours Spent	Things to remember next time

Share what you have learned with others: *Decide how you will share your new skills and insights with others. Some things to consider are: creating music, writing a poem or story, a craft projects or other art form can be exhibited at your county fair, provide a demonstration or presentation to your family or peers. The following guidelines will help you receive top honors at the fair.*

- The crust should be crisp, tender, and flaky and have a pleasing golden brown color all over
- Two crust pies should be attractive, with a carefully executed edge design and a graceful steam vent pattern.
- The surface of a two crust pie should be a pleasing golden brown and should not be disfigured by thickened juice spilling out onto the surface or over the edge of the pie plate.
- The top crust should be crisp.
- Flakiness, a very desirable characteristic in pastry, is judged most easily at the back edge of the crust where the crust is thickest.
- The bottom crust also should be flaky and fairly crisp, with no suggestion of doughiness.