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**Tips For Making The Perfect Pie Crust**

**By Jude Wright**

The baking of pies is sometimes referred to as one of the most difficult procedures in cooking. Use the tips below to make sure your pie crusts are perfect for that special occasion.

Tips:

- To make a fancy round rim edge: Trim dough even with rim of pan. Using a small bottle cap, cut small circles of leftover dough. Overlap the circles on moistened rim, pressing down lightly.
- A food processor or blender makes easy work of mixing pie dough, crushing cookies or crackers and grinding nuts.
- To prevent soggy crusts, brush inside of baked pie shell with beaten egg white. Chill for 30 minutes before baking or filling.
- To prevent weepy meringue, be sure sugar is dissolved in the egg whites. Spread meringue over warm filling to touch edges of crust all around. Do not overbake meringue and keep away from drafts when cooling.
- If dough is hard to handle and tough to eat, you may have added too much water. If dough cracks and is dry to eat, you may not have used enough water.
- For a flakier crust, substitute 1 tsp. vinegar for 1 tsp. of the cold water in the recipe.
- When cutting cream pies, dip knife in warm water so the filling will not stick to it.
- If your crust shrinks in the pan, there may have been too much shortening in the pastry or pastry may not have been fitted loosely enough in the pan. You might wish to let pastry relax in pan for 10 minutes before fluting edges to avoid shrinkage.
- Remember to handle dough as little as possible and to work quickly for a flakier crust.

## Tips For Making The Perfect Pie Crust

Whether it's a cream filling, fruit, chiffon or ice cream filling, you can match it with one of the crusts below for a delicious pie.

**Basic Pie Crust:** Sift 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour and 1/2 tsp. salt together. Cut in 1/2 cup shortening with fork or pastry blender until pieces are the size of small peas. Divide mixture into quarters. Sprinkle each quarter with 1–2 Tbs. water and gently toss with fork; push to side of bowl. Repeat until all four quarters are moistened. Form into a ball. Flatten on lightly floured surface by pressing with edge of hand. Roll from center to edge until 1/8 inch thick.

**Coconut Crust:** Combine 1 package (7 oz.) shredded coconut and 6 Tbs. melted butter or margarine, mixing well. Press evenly on bottom and sides of buttered 9–inch pie pan. Bake at 300 degrees for 25 to 35 minutes or until golden. Cool before filling.

**Meringue Crust:** Beat together 2 egg whites and 1/4 tsp. salt until frothy. Add 1/8 tsp. cream of tartar. Beat egg whites until stiff. Gradually add 1 tsp. vanilla extract and 6 Tbs. sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. Line greased and floured 9–inch pan with meringue. Bake at 275 degrees for 45 minutes. Cool before filling.

**Whole Wheat–Cheese Crust:** Sift together 1/2 cup EACH whole wheat flour and all-purpose flour. Stir in 3 Tbs. grated Cheddar cheese and 1/4 tsp. salt. Cut in 1/3 cup vegetable shortening until it resembles small peas. Sprinkle in 2 to 3 Tbs. cold water., 1 Tbs. at a time, mixing dough with a fork until it holds together. Form into a ball. Roll to fit a 9–inch pie plate. Trim and flute.

Jude Wright is the webmistress of multiple websites. Visit her popular recipe and cooking site at

<http://homestylerecipesonline.com>

for cooking information, lessons and yummy recipes.

### **EASY No–Roll Pie Crust**

**By LeAnn R. Ralph**

EASY No–Roll Pie Crust 3 cups flour 1 teaspoon salt 2 teaspoons sugar 2/3 cup cooking oil (I like to use Canola oil) 1/3 cup water or milk

Measure all ingredients into a mixing bowl and stir with a fork. Pat into pie pan with fingers or use the back of a spoon. Use with your favorite pie recipes.

This recipe will make enough for: 3 eight–inch one–crust pies (or) 2 eight–inch two–crust pies (or) 2 ten–inch one–crust pies (or) 1 ten–inch two–crust pie with a generous crumble crust.

To make the crumble crust, use half of the mixture for the bottom crust and then add 1/4 cup brown sugar to the remainder and sprinkle on top of your pie filling.

## Tips For Making The Perfect Pie Crust

For a baked pie shell, bake the crust at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until light brown.

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LeAnn R. Ralph is the author of the books: "Christmas in Dairyland (True Stories from a Wisconsin Farm)" and "Preserve Your Family History (A Step-by-Step Guide for Writing Oral Histories" (e-book). You are invited to order a book from Rural Route 2. You are also invited to sign up for LeAnn's FREE! monthly newsletter, Rural Route 2 News. Visit --

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