

PIE CRUST:

- 2/3 cup shortening, chilled and cut into chunks
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4-5 tablespoons ice water
- ¼ teaspoon white vinegar

DIRECTIONS:

- In a medium-sized mixing bowl, whisk together the flour and salt.
- Add the shortening, working it in roughly with your fingers, a pastry cutter, two knives, a food processor or mixer. Don't be too thorough; the mixture should be quite uneven, with big chunks of shortening mixed in with the smaller ones.
- Drizzle 4 tablespoons of ice-water and the vinegar over the flour mixture, tossing gently to combine.
- Add enough additional water to make a chunky, "shaggy" fairly cohesive mixture. It should hold together when you gather a bit up and squeeze it in your hand. Beware of kneading the pastry too much and/or adding too much water, as this will toughen the crust.
- Before shaping, transfer the shaggy mixture to a piece of parchment paper. Press it into a rough rectangle and fold the dough into thirds, like a business letter. If necessary, spritz any dry areas with cold water and flatten and fold again, repeating the process until all bits of dough have been incorporated. Folding the dough in this fashion will create more flaky layers in your final crust.
- Divide the dough in half. Gather each piece into a rough disk about ¾-inch thick. Smooth the disks; it's OK if they have a few cracks in the surface.
- Wrap the crusts in plastic storage wrap. Label and chill for 30 minutes.

HINTS:

- People get nervous about pie crust, and in their anxiety, they tend to work the dough too much. Working the shortening or butter in completely makes a mealy crust rather than a flaky one.
- Chill dough 1 hour or up to overnight. Or wrap in aluminum foil over the plastic and freeze for up to two months.
- Shortening, thanks to its relatively high melting point, helps crust maintain its structure, preventing your pretty crimp or other decorative touches from collapsing as the pie bakes.
- Other options for thickeners include tapioca, ClearJel, pie filling enhancer, or cornstarch.
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice can be added to the filling.
- Apple pie spice can be substituted for cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons of butter can be dotted across the pie filling prior to adding the top crust. This enhances the flavor of flour thickened pies.

PIE FILLING INGREDIENTS:

- 7 cups thinly sliced apples
- 3/4 cups sugar
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- dash salt

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place apple slices in a bowl.
2. Mix sugar, flour, cinnamon, and salt in a small bowl.
3. Add flour mixture to apples toss until blended well.
4. Lightly grease pie pan. Dust rolling surface and rolling pin with flour.
5. Roll one disc of pie crust dough 3-4" wider than the pie plate.
6. Roll dough onto pin and unroll into pie plan. Press gently.
7. Trim edges of crust to be 1" overhang all around.
8. Add apple filling to pan.
9. Dust surface with more flour, if needed. Roll second disc of dough 2" wider than pan.
10. Roll dough onto pin and unroll onto pie. Trim any excess pieces.
11. Turn edge of bottom crust over top crust edge, and crimp to seal.
12. With small knife or decorative cutter, cut several steam vents in pie crust top.
13. Keep pie refrigerated until ready to bake.
14. To freeze, wrap in plastic wrap, then foil. Freeze no longer than 3 months.

To Bake:

From chilled:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Place pie on foil lined baking sheet.
2. Brush top of pie with milk or beaten egg white and sprinkle with granulated sugar.
3. Bake the pie for 20 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 375°F and bake for 40 minutes more, until you see the filling bubbling inside the pie (and perhaps dripping onto the parchment). Check the pie after half an hour of baking time and cover the edges with foil or a pie shield to keep them from browning too quickly, if necessary. Filling should be bubbling.

From frozen:

1. Remove pie from freezer and unwrap (if thawing prior to baking, leave wrapped in plastic – bake as above)
2. Preheat oven to 425°F. Place pie on foil lined baking sheet.
3. Brush top of pie with milk or beaten egg white and sprinkle with granulated sugar.
4. Bake the pie for 30-35 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 375°F and bake for 50-55 minutes more, until you see the filling bubbling inside the pie (and perhaps dripping onto the parchment). Check the pie occasionally and cover the edges with foil or a pie shield to keep them from browning too quickly, if necessary. Filling should be bubbling.