



# Pie Making Tips

By Sally Wise

- ❖ Always use good quality shortening – butter and lard are especially good. Margarine can be used, but the result may not be quite so good (though perfectly adequate)
- ❖ Avoid over handling the pastry dough, otherwise it will toughen and shrink during baking
- ❖ Be careful with adding liquid. Adding too little will make the pastry dry and brittle and difficult to handle and shape. Too much liquid will cause shrinkage during baking.
- ❖ The reason for the variation is that flour will vary in its moisture content from day to day and also from brand to brand.
- ❖ Although it is not absolutely necessary, adding an egg yolk to your pastry will make it more pliable and easier to work with
- ❖ Always chill the pastry for around 30 minutes before rolling out
- ❖ Roll out on a lightly floured surface (sprinkle dough with a little flour also)
- ❖ After lining the pie tin or dish with pastry, brush the pastry base with a little lightly whisked egg white. This helps prevent the filling seeping into the base, which would lead to a “soggy bottom”.



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- ❖ Prick the top of the pie with a fork – once for smaller pies, several times for a larger pie
- ❖ For larger double crust pies, I use a clear Pyrex dish as you can then tell when your pastry is sufficiently browned on its base
- ❖ Smaller pies are best made in metal pie tins
- ❖ Filling should be thickened enough (with a small amount of cornflour paste = i.e. a small amount of cornflour mixed to a paste with a very little cold water – stirring in while the mixture is boiling and simmering for a couple of minutes more). It needs to be of a consistency that holds its shape when at room temperature. Cool the mixture. It is best used at room temperature.
- ❖ For a change, try using a mashed potato topping instead of the top pastry. It is ideal to use up leftover mashed potato. Simply whisk in an egg. Spoon or pipe onto the top of the pie filling and if liked, sprinkle with a little finely grated tasty cheese or Parmesan.
- ❖ Cook pies for 10 minutes at a higher temperature – e.g. depending on your oven, 200 degrees C (fan forced), then reduce to 170 degrees to complete the cooking.



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# Sweet Short Crust Pastry

Recipe by Sally Wise

## INGREDIENTS

- ❖ 125g butter  
softened
- ❖ 125g sugar
- ❖ 1 egg
- ❖  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon  
baking powder
- ❖ 250g plain flour

## DIRECTIONS

Whisk the butter and sugar together, then whisk in the egg until well combined.

Mix in the combined baking powder and flour with a metal spoon to make a soft dough. Wrap in cling wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before using.

## NOTES

*The recipe can be made using gluten free flour (be sure the baking powder is also gluten free). It's a good idea to make a double batch of this pastry as it will keep well for at least two weeks in the fridge or four or more in the freezer. It is then always ready at hand to make a sweet pie or tarts.*



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# SAVOURY SHORTCRUST

Recipe by Sally Wise

## INGREDIENTS

- ❖ 300g plain flour
- ❖ ½ teaspoon salt
- ❖ 150g butter, diced
- ❖ 1 egg yolk, lightly whisked
- ❖ 3 tablespoons cold water, approximately
- ❖ 1 egg, separated

## NOTES

*This recipe will make sufficient pastry for one 20cm double crust pie, or two tart bases or 2 top crust only pies.*

*Although it is technically a savoury pastry, it can be used for pies with a sweet filling also.*

## METHOD

Place the flour, salt and butter in a food processor and process until it resembles breadcrumbs (or rub together with the fingertips to this stage). Turn out into a bowl and mix with enough water and egg yolk to bring it together into a soft dough (do this with a metal spoon). Wrap in cling film and place in fridge for at least 30 minutes.

Heat oven to 190°C. Grease a 20 cm round pie dish. To make a 2-crust pie, cut off two thirds and roll that first on a lightly floured surface to fit your pie dish.

Whisk the egg white until just broken up, then brush over the pastry base, right up to the edge. Spoon in the cooled filling. Roll out the other piece to fit the top. Put in place and crimp the edges together with your fingers or a fork.

Prick the pie in several places. Whisk the egg yolk with 1 tablespoon cold water and brush over the pastry. Bake for 20 to 30 minutes until golden.



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# APPLE PIE

Recipe by Sally Wise

## INGREDIENTS

- ❖ Sweet short crust pastry (see separate recipe)
- ❖ 1 egg white, lightly whisked (for sealing pastry)
- ❖ 700g cooking apples (such as Granny Smiths)- peeled, cored and sliced
- ❖ 1/3 cup water
- ❖ Sugar to taste
- ❖ 3 teaspoons cornflour mixed to a paste with 2 tablespoons water, optional

VARIATION – any fruit may be substituted for the apples, though the amount of cornflour paste will vary from fruit to fruit.

## DIRECTIONS

Place the apples in a saucepan with the water. Bring to the boil, stirring occasionally, and then simmer until softened. Add sugar to taste. If the mixture is quite runny, thicken with some or all of the cornflour paste. Cool completely.

Heat oven to 180 degrees C (fan forced). Grease a 20cm round pie dish.

On a lightly floured surface, and with the dough dusted with a sprinkling of flour, roll out two thirds of the pastry and fit into the base of the pie dish. Brush with a little of the whisked egg white, right up to the edges.

Spoon in the cooled apple mixture.

Roll out the remaining pastry and fit over the top. Trim any overhanging pastry.

Press edges together to seal well and crimp the edges decoratively. Prick the top pastry in several places with a fork.

Bake for 30 minutes or until the pastry is golden brown.



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# PEA PUREE (FOR BEEF PIE)

Recipe by Sally Wise

## INGREDIENTS

- ❖ 450g fresh or frozen peas
- ❖ ½ teaspoon salt
- ❖ 2 spring onions, white part only, chopped or 2 teaspoons grated onion
- ❖ 3 teaspoons lemon juice
- ❖ 125 ml cream
- ❖ ¼ cup grated Parmesan
- ❖ 1 egg white, lightly whisked

## DIRECTIONS

Cook the peas in boiling water to which the salt has been added for 3–5 minutes until just tender.

Drain, and immediately plunge into cold water to hold the colour. Drain again.

Place in the bowl of a food processor, with the remaining ingredients and whisk until smooth.

Add salt to taste.

Place a 6mm (or more) layer of the pea puree on top of the meat mixture before placing top pastry on the pie before baking.



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# TASTY BEEF PIE

Recipe by Sally Wise

## INGREDIENTS

- ❖ 1 batch savoury shortcrust pastry (see separate recipe)
- ❖ 1 tablespoon oil (such as rice bran or canola)
- ❖ 600g lean diced beef
- ❖ 250g lean beef mince
- ❖ 1 onion, diced
- ❖ 1 small to medium carrot, diced
- ❖ 1 stick celery, diced
- ❖ 3 teaspoons tomato sauce
- ❖ 3 teaspoons soy sauce
- ❖ 3 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- ❖ 2 teaspoons chutney (any sort)
- ❖ 500ml water
- ❖  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- ❖ 3 teaspoons cornflour mixed to a paste with 2 tablespoons cold water

## NOTES

If preferred use 375 ml of stout or beer as part of the measure of liquid for steak and stout pies

## DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 150 degrees C.

Pour the oil into a saucepan over medium high heat. When the oil is hot, add the diced beef and mince and cook, stirring often until browned and the mince is well broken up.

Add the onion and other vegetables and cook, stirring for 3 minutes more. Add the sauces, chutney, water and salt and bring to the boil, then reduce heat to very low. Place lid on saucepan and cover with the lid.

Cook for 1½ to 2 hours or until the meat is tender. Check during cooking time to check if more liquid is required. If so, add just enough to cover the rest of the ingredients, replace lid, and bring to simmering point again.

Cook until meat is tender then thicken with some or all of the cornflour paste. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cool before spooning into the pie case. (See method for filling and baking the pie in savoury short crust pastry recipe)



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