



INTRODUCTION

I have five favorite things about pie: The first is making it- from the moment my hands start cutting cold butter into flour, it just feels indescribably good. The second is baking it: The aroma is better than any scented candle I've ever purchased. The third is, of course, eating it, or even watching others eat a pie that I've made. Pie has a miraculous ability to be simultaneously comforting and special occasion worthy, both homey and fancy. It's delicious for dessert, but also fit for a meal in itself- even for breakfast, my personal ideal time for pie.

My fourth favorite thing about pie is its adaptability. I started baking pies as a teenager, alongside my Grandma Jeanne. We baked pies whenever I visited her, simply because we loved to eat them. I'd show up in the morning, and she'd casually bring out a big bowl of apples and say, "Let's bake a pie," as if she'd just had the idea, rather than admitting she'd been planning it since yesterday's trip to the grocery store. Because of those frequent and delicious baking sessions, pie was one of the first things I knew how to make well. It was one of the first things I learned to bake using my senses.

The fifth and final favorite thing about pie: I love teaching people how to bake it. From helping a friend bake her first cherry pie in my tiny apartment kitchen to teaching my husband how big the pieces of butter should be when he mixed his crust by hand to standing in front of a couple dozen people taking diligent notes in a kitchen classroom. Helping people bake a perfect pie, whatever that means to them, brings me joy.

While I love pretty much everything about pie, reason five is really why I wrote this book. I wanted to create a true handbook, filled with all the things I've learned. Yes, this book has loads of delicious recipes for every genre of pie, but it also contains everything you need to know to bake your own delicious pies - whatever you can dream up, with whatever you have on hand, I want readers, armed with this book, to learn to use their senses in the kitchen and make their best pies ever.

So, grab an apron and a rolling pin and meet me in your kitchen: Let's bake a pie!

-Erin Jeanne McDowell

Wasatch County Cooking Class, November 2025

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All-Buttah Pie Dough

Yield: 1 9-Inch crust

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ¼ Cups all-purpose flour (150 g)
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt (1 g)
- 8 Tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into ½" cubes
- ¼ cup ice water, plus more if needed (60 g)

DIRECTIONS

1. Start by cutting your cold butter cubes. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour and salt. Add the cubes of butter, tossing them through the flour until each piece is well coated. Cut the butter into the flour by pressing them between your fingers, flattening them into big shards. As you work, continue to toss the butter through the flour, recoating the shingled pieces. If you have warm hands, you may want to use a pastry cutter (sometimes I do a few passes with pastry cutter then toss the mixture with my hands before continuing). Take care to ensure that all of the cubes of butter are fully coated in flour as you work.
2. For a flaky crust, continue cutting the butter into the flour just until the pieces of butter are about the size of walnut halves. Or for a mealy crust, work the mixture together until the pieces of butter are about the size of peas or to your desired size.
3. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. Add the amount of ice water listed in the recipe to the well. (Different types or even brands, of flour hydrate differently, so it is difficult to give a precise amount that will work every time; consider the base amount given as a solid jumping off point, knowing that you will almost always need to add more.) Using your hands, toss the flour with the water to start to mix the two together (this begins to combine them without creating too much gluten). As the flour begins to hydrate, you can switch to more of a kneading motion-but don't overdo it or the dough will be tough. Then add more water, about 1 Tablespoon (15g) at a time, until the dough is properly hydrated. It should be uniformly combined and holds together easily, but it shouldn't look totally smooth. Dough that is too dry may have a sort of "dusty" appearance, or pockets of unhydrated flour; it will not hold together and will look crumbly. Dough that is too wet will feel sticky or tacky to the touch, and it is often smoother and/or lighter in color than a properly hydrated dough.
4. Form the dough into an even disk, about 1 inch thick. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or up to 2 days.

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Rough Puff Pastry

Yield: (2) 9-inch crusts or 1 large square 15" x 15"

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour (302 g)
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt (2g)
- 8 oz. (2 sticks) cold butter, cut into ¼" cubes
- ⅓ cup ice water, plus more if needed

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium bowl, stir the flour and salt together to combine. Add the cubes of butter, tossing them through the flour until each individual piece is well coated. Cut the butter into the flour by pressing the pieces between your fingers, flattening them into big shards. As you work, continue to toss the butter through the flour, recoating the shingled pieces. The goal is to flatten each piece of butter only once, leaving the pieces very large (they will get smaller/more dispersed through the process of folding the dough).

2. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture. Add the ice water to the well and, using your hands, toss the flour with the water to start to mix the two together (this begins to combine them without creating too much gluten). As the flour begins to hydrate, you can switch to more of a kneading motion—but don't overdo it, or the dough will be tough. Then add more water, about 1 tablespoon at a time, until the dough is properly hydrated. It should be uniformly combined and hold together easily, but it shouldn't look totally smooth. Divide the dough in half and form each piece into a disk. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

3. On a lightly floured surface, working with one piece of dough at a time, roll out the dough to about ½ inch thick (the exact size/shape of the dough doesn't matter here, just the thickness). Brush off any excess flour with a dry pastry brush, then fold the dough in half. Fold the dough in half again into quarters. Wrap the dough tightly in plastic wrap and chill for 15 to 30 minutes, until firm.

4. Repeat step 3 three more times: rolling out the dough, folding it, and chilling it each time before continuing. If you work quickly, you can sometimes do two rounds of folds back to back, but if the dough is soft or sticky, don't rush it.

5. Once the final fold is completed for each piece of dough, tuck the edges of the dough under to help form it into a rounded shape, then wrap again and chill at least 30 minutes before using.

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Apple Pie

Yield: one 9-inch pie

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds Honeycrisp or other good baking apples (6 large or 8 medium)
- 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 Tablespoons boiled cider
- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pie dough for a double crust, divided in half, shaped into disks, and chilled
- egg wash
- Turbinado sugar for sprinkling

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot, toss the apples, lemon juice, and light brown sugar together. Let sit for 30 to 45 minutes, tossing occasionally.
2. In a small bowl, whisk the granulated sugar, flour, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt together to combine. Set the pot over medium heat and cook, stirring constantly, until the apples are lightly softened and the juices have thickened, 6 to 8 minutes.
3. Add the boiled cider, if using, butter, and vanilla to the filling and stir to combine. Transfer the pie filling to a baking sheet or a large casserole dish and spread into an even layer to help it cool faster.
4. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees with a rack in the lower third (preferably with a Baking Steel or stone on it).
5. Roll out the top and bottom crusts (See page 34).
6. Transfer the filling to the prepared bottom crust, packing it in firmly and tightly to eliminate air pockets (this will help prevent the filling from shrinking away from the crust during baking). Use the rolling pin to gently unfurl the prepared top crust over the filling or make cutouts from the top crust. Press all around the edges to seal. Use scissors to trim the dough so there is only $\frac{1}{2}$ inch excess around the edges of the pie plate. Tuck the excess dough under itself so that it is flush with the edge of the pie plate. Crimp as desired (see page 80). Chill the pie in the refrigerator, uncovered, for at least 15 minutes, or up to 30 minutes.
7. Brush the top crust with egg wash, but don't egg wash the crimped edges, which tend to brown enough on their own. Sprinkle generously with turbinado sugar. Cut a few vents in the top crust.
8. Transfer the pie to a parchment-lined baking sheet and place in the oven. Bake until the crust is deeply golden brown, 55 to 65 minutes - the filling may bubble up a bit through the vents. If the crust is browning too quickly, tent the brown portions with foil. Cool completely before slicing and serving.

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Pistachio Cream Pie

Yield: One 9-inch pie

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups unsalted raw pistachios
- 1 cup granulated sugar, divided
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- 2 ½ cups whole milk
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 3 large egg yolks, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon almond extract
- 1 cup cream whipped with ¼ granulated sugar and 1 teaspoon vanilla (for topping)
- Chopped pistachios for sprinkling

DIRECTIONS

1. In a blender or food processor, blend the pistachios with ½ cup of the sugar until relatively finely ground (it's OK if it's still a bit coarse). With the blender or food processor running, add the cream and puree into a smooth paste.
2. Transfer the pistachio cream to a medium pot and whisk in the milk to combine. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring constantly.
3. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whisk the remaining ½ cup sugar and the cornstarch to combine. Add the eggs, egg yolks, and salt and whisk well to combine.
4. When the milk mixture comes to a simmer, pour about one quarter of it into the eggs, whisking constantly, to temper the eggs. Pour this mixture back into the pot, whisking constantly, reduce the heat to medium-low, and switch to a silicone spatula. Cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens and comes to a boil (you're looking for fat bubbles coming from the center of the pot).
5. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the butter, vanilla, and almond extract, mixing until the butter is melted and the pudding is smooth.
6. Pour the filling into the cooled pie crust and spread into an even layer. Cover the filling with plastic wrap placed directly against the surface and refrigerate until chilled and set, at least 4 hours (or up to 24 hours).
7. Top with Whipped Cream and chopped pistachios.

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White Chocolate-Peppermint Pie

Yield: One 9-inch pie

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 6 ounces white chocolate, chopped
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- One 9-inch pie crust parbaked, and cooled completely
- 1 recipe Peppermint Meringue Topping
- 1 recipe White Chocolate Cold Snap Topping
- a few drops of red food coloring
- Crushed peppermints or candy canes for garnish (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees with a rack in the lower third (preferably with a Baking Steel or stone on it).
2. Bring a medium saucepan of water to a simmer over medium heat. In a medium heatproof bowl, combine the cream and chocolate. Place the bowl over the saucepan of water (the bottom of the bowl should not touch the water and heat, stirring frequently, until the chocolate is fully melted (take care not to overheat it-white chocolate is prone to burning). Let cool for about 5 minutes, or until no longer warm to the touch before proceeding.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk the sugar and flour combine. Whisk in the milk and the white chocolate mixture. Add the vanilla extract and salt and whisk just to combine-too much whisking will lead to lots of air bubbles that can linger on the surface of the custard after you transfer it to the crust.
4. Place the parbaked crust on a baking sheet and pour in the custard. Bake until the filling appears set at the edges but is still jiggly in the center, 30-35 minutes.
5. Spoon, pipe or swoop the meringue topping onto pie. Transfer the pie to the refrigerator for 1 hour or to the freezer for 20-25 minutes.
6. Transfer the cold-snap topping to a large liquid measuring cup and squeeze a few drops of food coloring into it, letting drops fall in a few different places on the surface. Gently swirl the measuring cup to barely incorporate the food coloring-do not stir! The idea is to get it lightly swirly (it will continue to swirl when you pour it over the pie).
7. Carefully pour the cold-snap topping over the pie(or, if that makes you nervous, spoon it over with a medium spoon): Start at the top, letting it run down the sides, then pour (or spoon it) farther down the sides as needed to cover all of the topping. (Some of it will pool on the surface of the pie, but starting from the top minimizes this as much as possible.) Sprinkle the crushed peppermints, if using, over the surface or around the edges of the pie. The cold-snap topping should set quickly at room temperature-if it doesn't transfer to the refrigerator to firm up before slicing and serving the pie.

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Meringue Topping

Yield: 4 ½ cups

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large egg whites
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- Large pinch of fine sea salt
- ¾ teaspoon peppermint extract

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring a medium pot filled with about 2 inches of water to a simmer over medium-low heat. Set a medium bowl over the pot, add all the ingredients, and whisk to combine. Then heat, whisking constantly, or beating with a hand mixer, until the mixture reaches 160 degrees on a thermometer.
2. Remove the bowl from the heat and continue to whisk or transfer the heated mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whip attachment. Whip the mixture on medium-high speed until it reaches medium peaks, 4 to 5 minutes.
3. Pile the meringue on top of the cooled pie. Spread the meringue out to the edges, but keep it mounded a bit higher in the middle.

White Chocolate Cold-Snap Topping

INGREDIENTS

- 7 ½ ounces white chocolate, finely chopped
- ¼ cup coconut oil, melted

DIRECTIONS

1. Melt the chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl set over a medium saucepan of simmering water or in a 15-second bursts in the microwave. Stir in the coconut oil.
2. Let the mixture cool for a few minutes before pouring over a chilled pie.

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Roasted Tomato and Goopy Cheese Free-Form Pie

Yield: One 13" x 13" pie

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds cherry tomatoes
- 6 large garlic, unpeeled, smashed with the side of a knife
- 3 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary, plus a few sprigs for garnish
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh thyme, plus a few sprigs for garnish
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 recipe Rough Puff Pastry
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese
- 12 ounces Brie, Camembert, or other soft-rind creamy cheese, cut into 1 inch thick slices
- Egg wash

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Spread the tomatoes and garlic out on an unlined baking sheet. Drizzle the olive oil over the tomatoes and toss well to coat. Sprinkle the rosemary and thyme evenly over the tomatoes, then season with salt and pepper. Transfer the baking sheet to the oven and roast until the tomatoes are blistered and collapsed, 25 to 30 minutes. Let the tomatoes cool completely. Raise the oven temperature to 425 degrees.
3. While the tomatoes cool, on a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to a square a little larger than 15 by 15 inches and about ¼ inch thick. Transfer to a parchment lined baking sheet (Don't worry if it hangs over the edges of the pan for now-you will be folding the degrees over) and dock it all over with a fork.
4. Squeeze the roasted garlic out of its skin into a small bowl and use a fork to mash it with the Parmesan. Spread the mixture onto the dough leaving at least 2 inches uncovered around the edges. Arrange the tomatoes in a single layer on the dough, again leaving the edges uncovered. Scatter the cheese evenly over the tomatoes. Fold the uncovered edges of the dough up over the tomatoes, encasing the perimeter of the filling.
5. Brush egg wash over the edges of the dough and sprinkle a little more Parmesan on top.
6. Transfer the baking sheet to the oven and bake the pie until the crust is evenly golden brown and very crisp, 30-35 minutes. Allow the galette to cool for 15 minutes before serving, garnish with the rosemary and thyme sprigs.

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