

Chocolate Pudding Pie

To make decorative chocolate curls, wrap a medium-size chunk of semisweet chocolate in plastic wrap. Rub the wrapped chocolate between your hands for 1 or 2 minutes to warm it; the chocolate should not melt. For larger chunks, microwave on low for about 5 seconds. Unwrap the chocolate and, using a vegetable peeler, slowly and evenly scrape the edge of the chunk until curls form.

To make the filling, in a heavy saucepan over low heat, warm together the milk and chocolate, whisking until the chocolate is melted; the mixture will be speckled.

In a bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until pale yellow. Add the cornstarch and salt, then the vanilla, and whisk until well blended. Slowly pour the warm chocolate mixture into the yolk mixture, whisking constantly until well blended. Return the mixture to the saucepan and cook over medium heat until it thickens and begins to bubble slowly, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir until smooth, about 1 minute.

Pour the filling into the crumb crust and smooth with a spatula. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing it directly onto the surface, and refrigerate until completely cold and firm, 2 to 3 hours.

To make the topping, using an electric mixer on medium-high speed or a whisk, beat together the cream, sugar and vanilla until stiff peaks form. Spread the whipped cream on top of the pie. Decorate with chocolate curls. Refrigerate until ready to serve, but let the pie stand at room temperature for 20 minutes before serving to take the chill off. Makes one 9-inch pie; serves 8.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Pie & Tart*, by Carolyn Beth Weil (Simon & Schuster, 2003).

Troubleshooting Pie & Tart Dough

What happened	Why it happened
Pie dough is sticky and hard to roll out.	Too much water was added, use extra flour when rolling; dough is too warm, chill dough in refrigerator for 30 minutes before proceeding.
Pie dough is stiff and hard to roll out.	Not enough water was added to dough, or dough is too cold; let it warm up before proceeding.
Blind-baked single-crust pie did not hold its shape.	Too few pie weights were used for blind baking; dough did not rest long enough or was too soft.
Blind-baked single-crust pie shrank in pan.	Dough was not chilled long enough, or was stretched too much when lining the pan.
Pie is browning too quickly.	Oven is too hot; cover loosely with aluminum foil and continue baking.
Piecrust is not fully baked on bottom.	Crust was not partially baked before filling was added; especially true for custard pies.
Piecrust is dense rather than flaky.	Butter and dough were overworked.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Essentials of Baking*, by Cathy Burgett, Elinor Klivans & Lou Seibert Pappas (Oxmoor House, 2008).

Ingredients for Chocolate Pudding Pie

For the filling:

2½ cups milk

5 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped into slivers

4 egg yolks

¾ cup sugar

3 Tbs. cornstarch

¼ tsp. salt

1½ tsp. vanilla extract

1 cookie crumb crust, made with chocolate cookies

For the topping:

1 cup heavy cream

1 Tbs. sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

Chocolate curls for decorating

Ingredients for Flaky Pie Pastry

1½ cups all-purpose flour

1 Tbs. sugar (optional)

¼ tsp. salt

5 Tbs. cold unsalted butter, cut into ¼-inch pieces

3 Tbs. cold vegetable shortening, cut into ¼-inch pieces

4 Tbs. ice water

Ingredients for Rich Tart Pastry

1¼ cups all-purpose flour

½ cup confectioners' sugar

¼ tsp. salt

8 Tbs. (1 stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into ¼-inch pieces

2 egg yolks

1 Tbs. heavy cream

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Technique Class: Baking Series: Pies & Tarts



When you master the art of making a flaky, buttery pie or tart pastry, you'll feel like a pro. It just takes a bit of practice, a dash of patience and the right equipment—before you know it, you'll be turning out first-rate crusts with ease!

Flaky Pie Pastry

The rich flavor of butter and the flake-making quality of vegetable shortening produce a pie pastry that is both versatile and delicious. The butter and shortening should be very cold so that they will form layers in the crust that contribute to the overall flakiness. If you are making a savory pie, omit the sugar.

In the bowl of a food processor, combine the flour, sugar and salt. Pulse 2 or 3 times to mix. Add the butter and shortening pieces and pulse 8 to 10 times until the mixture forms large, coarse crumbs. Add the ice water a little at a time and pulse 10 to 12 times until the dough begins to come together in a mass but does not form a ball.

Transfer the dough to a work surface and shape into a 6-inch disk. Wrap the disk tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate until well chilled, about 1 hour or up to overnight. Makes one 9-inch piecrust.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Essentials of Baking*, by Cathy Burgett, Elinor Klivans & Lou Seibert Pappas (Oxmoor House, 2008).

Rich Tart Pastry

Butter-rich tart pastry, also known as pâte sucrée, results in a tender texture, rather than the flaky character of a successful piecrust. The dough is similar to a smooth cookie dough, and once baked, it is reminiscent of a good butter cookie. While the pastry is tender, it is also strong enough to support a baked tart outside of the pan.

In the bowl of a food processor, combine the flour, confectioners' sugar and salt. Pulse 1 or 2 times to mix. Add the butter pieces and pulse 7 to 8 times until the mixture forms large, coarse crumbs the size of large peas.

In a small bowl, lightly beat the egg yolks with a fork, then stir in the cream until blended. With the motor running, add the egg mixture and process just until the dough begins to come together but does not form a ball.

Transfer the dough to a work surface and shape into a 6-inch disk. Wrap the disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm, at least 45 minutes or up to overnight. Makes one 9½-inch tart crust.

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