

# Pie Crust



Ah, the inexorable pursuit of the perfect pie crust. Only slightly less frustrating than macarons. But after many Thanksgivings and Christmases of aggravation with tearing and shrinking dough I finally figured out the simple mistakes I was making. As a cake decorating instructor recently said very poignantly “with pastry its all about temperature.” So simple and so simple to brush off but so true.

My mistake was in letting the dough warm up and touching it too much. I’ve learned to pulse the flour, cold butter and cold water in the food processor until it just pulls from the sides. I then dump it out on the counter and quickly bring it together in a ball. I wrap it with saran wrap and then press it into a disc with the saran wrap over it. So, you see, I barely lay my hands on it or overwork it. I try to chill it for only half an hour and then roll it out as quickly as I can. If I leave it in the fridge for more than half an hour then I have to leave it out for about 15 minutes before I roll it out. If you don’t let over-chilled dough warm up enough it will crumble. If you let it warm up too much the butter will soften and the dough will tear.

After you roll it out and lay it in your pie plate chill it

for another 30 minutes before baking. This will keep it from shrinking in the oven. This is especially important if your dough is heavy in butter. The recipe I'm using now for a single crust:

1 1/2 cups flour

7 Tbsp butter

pinch of salt

1/4 cup water plus 1-2 Tbsp if necessary

I get a very tasty pie crust which is flaky enough even without shortening or lard of which I'm not particularly fond.

The picture above is what was left of a lattice crust salted caramel and apple pie. Happy Thanksgiving!