

Vegan Apple Pie

It took me a long time to learn how to make my own pie crust.

It was very frustrating trying different recipes – all promising to be “perfect” and “fool-proof.” I tried vodka, apple cider vinegar, rolling it between parchment paper, pressing it in, you name it. Then I learned that the trick was not in the recipe but in the technique. When making pie dough a “minimal touching” approach is best. The doughs usually have a butter content of around 60% (butter to flour, that is) which means temperature control is key. The butter needs to stay cool during the entire process of making the dough. Also, achieving a flaky crust means maintaining pockets of butter between layers of dough. When that dough then goes in the oven the steam from the butter “inflates” the layers of dough thereby creating the flakiness. If you knead that dough or overwork it you are eliminating those precious pockets of butter and essentially creating a mealy cookie dough. Which is ok if you are making pate sucree but not a flaky pie crust. So, keep your hands off the dough. You are just going to gather the dough into a ball then smear it briefly. That’s it. Don’t worry if it looks rough.

The other important factor in making pie dough is moving the dough while rolling it. On a well floured surface, start rolling it out into a circle, then pick it up and move it a quarter turn. Make sure it’s not sticking to the surface by flinging more flour underneath if necessary. Keep rolling and turning it until you get it to size. If its too warm the fat will start to soften and it will be difficult to roll out.

Put it back in the fridge for a few minutes. If you have a digital thermometer you are looking for a dough temp of about 60F. If it is too cold it will start to crack. Give it another five minutes on the bench.

Let’s talk fat. The fat has to be well chilled before incorporating it because you will be working it into the flour

and that will create heat. You can do this in the food processor which will be faster. But doing it by hand will give you a better feel for it. Imagine that every bit of flour needs to be coated with fat but you don't want the fat pieces to be so small that it just turns into a cookie. You want to end up with pea-sized and walnut-sized pieces. I'll be honest. I don't like to use shortening if I don't have to. I prefer all butter crusts. But many, many pie crusts are made with shortening because it is easier to roll out and produces a flakier crust.

No crazy stories before church today except the usual comment – in a falsetto voice that doesn't sound anything like me – about how long it was supposed to take to bake the pies versus how long it actually took and a bonus comment this week about baking not being the exact science that it is said to be (or some annoying nonsense to that effect). Since Husband insists on taking some credit for my bakes in some shape or form he will get a nod for the combination of apples he picked for “that perfect contrast of sweet and sour.” By the way, if you will make a lot of apple pies, tarts, applesauce, etc. I highly recommend you invest in the [Kitchenaid spiralizer attachment.](#)

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