

Chronicle Classic: Best Way Piecrust

Makes one 9-inch pie shell

From Chronicle staff writer Lynne Char Bennett, adapted from the "Fannie Farmer Baking Book," by Marion Cunningham (Alfred A. Knopf, 1984). Use trans fat-free shortening, substitute lard for the shortening or use all butter. An all-butter crust will have great flavor, but may not be quite as flaky.

1½ cups all-purpose flour

½ teaspoon kosher salt

¼ cup vegetable shortening

¼ cup unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

3 to 4 tablespoons ice water

Additional flour for rolling

Instructions: Mix together the flour and salt in a bowl. Add the shortening and butter, and work it into the flour with your fingertips or a pastry blender or pulse in a food processor until the mixture resembles fresh bread-crumbs. Sprinkle in the water, 1 tablespoon at a time, stirring lightly with a fork after each addition. Use enough water so the dough holds together.

Form the dough into a ball and flatten the

top to form a disk. Wrap the dough completely in plastic wrap and let it rest in the refrigerator for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface or between 2 sheets of waxed paper until it is about ⅛-inch thick and 2 inches larger than your inverted pie pan.

Transfer the dough to the pan, then trim edges to make about a 1-inch overhang. Roll the edge under and crimp decoratively.

If your filling recipe calls for a prebaked shell, line the pastry with a piece of aluminum foil shiny-side down. Fill with dried beans, rice or pie weights. Bake in a preheated 425° oven for 15 minutes, then remove the foil and beans. Return the pie shell to the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes longer, rotating the pan a couple of times, until evenly browned.