

KITCHEN ESSENTIALS:

10 techniques every cook should know

Rolling out pie crust

Even the most experienced baker can have trouble rolling out a pie crust and getting it into the pan. It's a technique that, above all else, requires practice. Plus, outside factors, like the temperature of the room or the dough, can affect success.

Start with a flattened round of pie dough that has been chilled in the refrigerator. You want it to be cold enough so the butter or fat doesn't melt, but malleable enough that you can roll it out somewhat easily with a rolling pin.

Have a pile of flour on hand for dusting — it's imperative to spread it on your work surface, sprinkle it on top of the dough and rub some onto the rolling pin, to ensure that nothing sticks. Starting in the center of the dough, make short strokes toward the edges in different directions, turning the dough often as it becomes thinner to maintain a circular shape. Sprinkle the work surface and dough with flour as needed to prevent sticking; avoid adding too much flour, which will toughen the dough.

Stop rolling when the dough is about 2-3 inches larger than your inverted pie pan. Place the rolling pin on the edge of the dough that's

farthest away from you, and roll the dough around the pin toward you, until you have about half of it on the pin. Gently move the rolling pin over the pie pan, and slowly unroll the dough, draping and centering it over the pan, and gently lift and coax down into the edges. Lightly press the dough into the bottom corners of the pan.

Using a sharp knife, trim the excess dough around the outside, leaving a ½- to 1-inch overhang that you can roll under the border to create a thick edge, which gives the crust stability as it bakes. Decorate the border as desired, either with the tines of a fork or your fingers.

