Pie Crust (aka “Pastry”)

Recipe: Tom’s Pie Crust
Summary: *This is the traditional recipe for making pie crust (called “pastry” by some), as taught to me by my grandmother. These basic instructions are in pretty wide use, and used generally by most everyone I know who makes pie crust.*

Ingredients

{For one pie crust, for an open face pie such as pumpkin pie. Double the recipe if you need a top and bottom crust, as in the traditional closed apple pie}

- 1/3 cup shortening or lard.
- 1 cup all purpose flour (not self rising)
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon salt (omit if desired)
- ice water

Instructions

Quick Instructions: Mix shortening and flour. Add water until mixture just sticks together in a ball. Roll out, and put in a greased and floured pie pan.

Detailed Instructions:

1. Cut the shortening into the flour and salt *(salt is optional)*. I use my hands, but there is a kitchen tool for this purpose, if you don’t like getting flour on your hands.
2. Mix thoroughly until all traces of shortening are blended into the flour. Be gentle. Don’t maul the mixture. The goal is to have a slightly sticky feeling powder. If you can’t get all the clumps out, you may need to add a bit more flour. If your mix is too powdery, you may need to add a bit more shortening. I

tell whether the mix is right by the feel. If you're not sure, just use the ratio suggested here—1 shortening to 3 flour. If you are ready to proceed, then go to the next step. Usually I stop here, put the mixture in a covered bowl in the ice box and make my pie filling at this point. As mentioned below, a chilled mix works well.

3. Spoon in *ice* water one teaspoon at a time. Use ICE water, but don't let the ice fall in the mixture. Cold water—which chills the whole mixture—works much better than room temperature. You want to get the pastry just moist enough to stick together. Note, you want "moist" not "wet." If you want an estimate, you will probably need to add a couple of tablespoons to each half (top or bottom crust). But do NOT add all the water all at once. Do it slowly, and work it together gently with your hands. Again, don't maul the mix, but you need to mix the water in. As before, I do it by hand. If the mix is gooey, like toothpaste, then you added too much water. You might be able to salvage it by adding a bit of flour, or you might be better off just chucking it in the waste can, and starting over. Shortening and flour are the cheapest ingredients in most pies, so there's no great loss in starting over.
4. Form the mixture into a ball. Flour the top and bottom. Put an ample amount of flour on the surface you are going to roll the dough on. Put on the clean hard surface to roll out the dough with your rolling pin. Roll the dough into a circle shape a little larger than the pie pan. Dust the top of the dough with flour periodically in order to keep the dough from sticking to the rolling pin.
5. Separate the dough from the rolling surface. I use a long knife to gently pull the crust up without tearing it. This is a good place to take a break. Maybe check on the pie filling, or the score of the ballgame. Waiting a few minutes is not required, but may help in keeping the

dough from tearing in the next step.

6. Fold the pie crust in half (for the top crust) or quarters (for the bottom crust). Grease the pie pan with shortening, and dust it with flour. Then put the pie crust in the pan and unfold it. The point of folding the dough is to prevent it from tearing as you move it. Press the dough into the pie pan. Cut any excess from around the edge. I never re-use the trimmings, though I'm not sure it would be disaster, if you did. You can use the trimmed pie crust as patches to fix tears or holes in the crust. Wet one side of the patch and apply it the area to be repaired.
7. Repeat for the top crust, if needed.

NOTES: I have used a bit of vegetable oil in lieu of all of the shortening when I ran low—without any ill effects. There is a recipe which calls for ALL vegetable oil instead of shortening, though I've never personally tried it. Also, I think you are safe in omitting the salt altogether. I can't taste any difference in the saltless version, and I doubt most people could.

CulinaryTradition: *USA (Traditional)*

My rating: 5.0 stars

