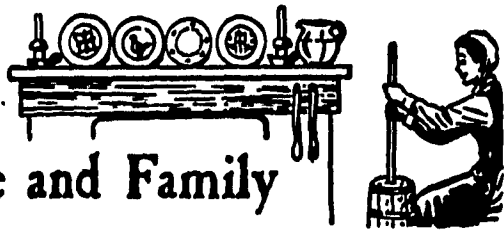


# For the Farm Wife and Family



By Mrs. Richard C. Spence, Food Editor

## The Great American Dessert



SPENCE

Fresh-from-the-oven homemade pie with a light, tender, melt-in-your-mouth crust is still the all-time favorite American dessert. Ask any man.

Good pastry is described in terms of flakiness and tenderness. A pastry that has both of these characteristics is preferred. But of the two qualities, tenderness is most important. Pie crust tenderness is encouraged by conditions that limit both hydration (rate of moisture absorption) and the development of gluten. Gluten is formed when gliadin and glutenin, the two protein substances in flour, combine with water. Gluten has an elastic strengthening quality which increases as the dough is manipulated. The more gluten that is

developed, the less tender the pastry. Of all the edible fats, lard has the greatest shortening value or ability to prevent the cohesion of gluten strands during mixing, thereby shortening them and making the product tender. Hydrogenated vegetable shortenings are next in value followed by margarine and butter. Hydration and development of gluten are also limited by adding a minimum amount of water and mixing as little as possible after each addition.

The controversy over whether the shortening should be cold or at room temperature goes on. The decision is dictated by the desired result. Cold shortening contributes to a more flaky texture than shortening at room temperature, but at the cost of lesser tenderness.

When a pastry dough is rolled flattened into sheets between

the layers of flour and water, separating them. Then, during baking, the shortening melts and maintains the layers producing flakiness. This is why pie crusts made with hot water or by the beaten method can be delicious but not as flaky as those made with cold water. Hot water softens the shortening before baking, allowing it to penetrate the flour. Too much shortening in proportion to other ingredients will make a crust greasy, crumbly and difficult to handle; too little will make a solid, hard, tough crust.

A basic pie crust formula requires flour and water for structure. Too much flour will make a crust tough, dry and hard; too little will make it dif-

ficult to roll out and pick up. Water is used to bind and hold together the ingredients. Cold water, besides keeping the shortening from melting, has a greater expansion when it is changed into steam during baking than hot water has.

In pastry, salt is used for flavor. The amount should not be excessive or it will overpower the taste of the filling.

The outside characteristics of pastry should be analyzed, too. Careful manipulation and handling gives an even crust thickness all over and a crust that fits the pan well. Correct baking time and temperature should produce a crust that is light golden brown with darker brown edges.

A vinegar pie crust is often referred to as a "foolproof" formula. The role of vinegar, an acid, in the dough is to increase the solubility of the glutenin in wheat, making the dough more mellow and crust more tender. The dough is easy to work with.

### DOUBLE CRUST VINEGAR PASTRY

- 2 cups sifted enriched flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 3 tablespoons cold water
- Desired filling
- Milk

Sift together flour and salt. Cut shortening into flour mixture until pieces are size of small peas. Blend beaten egg, vinegar and water together. Sprinkle dry ingredients with liquid, a little at a time, mixing lightly until dough begins to stick together. Use only as much liquid as necessary. Press into

ball; divide in half. Roll one portion on lightly floured surface to circle 1/4-inch thick; fit loosely into pan. Trim pastry. Fill with desired filling. Roll out remaining dough; prick or slash to allow steam to escape. Arrange top pastry over filling; trim, seal edge and flute. Brush with milk. Bake in preheated 425 degree oven 20 to 25 minutes, or until lightly browned.

The characteristics of this hot water chocolate crust are tenderness and a cookie-like texture—a mealy, rather than flaky texture, because there is a more thorough blending of flour and fat.

### CHOCOLATE HOT WATER PASTRY

- 1 cup sifted enriched flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons cocoa
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup shortening

Sift together dry ingredients. Add hot water and vanilla to shortening; beat with fork until smooth. Sift dry ingredients over creamed mixture; stir in well. Dough should cling together. Press into ball. Roll out on lightly floured surface to circle 1/4-inch thick; loosen frequently to prevent sticking. Fit loosely into pan; trim and flute with fork to prevent puffing.

Bake in preheated 400 degree oven 8 to 10 minutes, or until done.

This recipe produces a refrigerator pie crust dough—rich, different and golden yellow in color.

### GOLDEN CREAM CHEESE PASTRY

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 pkg. (3 oz.) cream cheese
- 1 cup sifted enriched flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Cream butter and cream cheese together until smooth. Sift flour and salt together; add half at a time to creamed mixture and mix until thoroughly blended. Form into flattened ball and wrap in waxed paper. Chill until dough handles easily (45 minutes in freezer or overnight in refrigerator). Roll out on floured surface, to circle 1/4 inch thick; loosen frequently from surface. Fit loosely into pan; trim pastry and shape edge. Prick bottom and sides with fork to help prevent puffing. Bake in preheated 450 degree oven, 8 to 10 minutes, or until lightly browned.

The beaten method of preparing a pie crust dough is appealing because it conserves physical energy.

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