

PIE!

GENEVIEVE TAYLOR

A close-up photograph of three individual pies, each baked in a white ceramic mug with a black rim and handle. The pies are golden-brown and appear to be filled with a meat and vegetable mixture. They are arranged on a metal baking tray, with some liquid visible around the base of the mugs. The background is dark and out of focus.

**100 GORGEOUSLY
GLORIOUS RECIPES**

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A note about the text

This book was set using ITC Century and Serifa. The first Century typeface was cut in 1894. In 1975, an updated family of Century typefaces was designed by Tony Stan for ITC. The Serifa font was designed by Adrian Frutiger in 1978.

Thanks

Pie! has been a brilliant book to write and I have loved every minute of it. Most of the recipe testing happened during the hottest summer for many a year, yet funnily enough I received not one complaint from friends and family as I fed them endless pies in the blistering sun of the heatwave... proving there is a pie for everyone, whatever the weather. I'd like to say thanks, once again, to Absolute Press for trusting me with this book – Jon Croft, Meg Avent, Alice Gibbs and Matt Inwood – thank you one and all, it's always a pleasure.

Big thanks to Kate Hordern, my agent, for her consistently calm encouragement and positivity.

Photographer Mike Cooper yet again delivered a book full of beautiful images that are an inspiration. Thanks, Mike, for bringing my recipes alive!

Finally, thanks to my family, who make the endless multi-tasking that every working mum knows only too well feel not only possible but truly worth it. Rob, Izaak and Eve: lots of love, always.

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If there is a person in the land who doesn't enjoy a pie, then I certainly haven't met them! Universally adored, when you mention the word pie to almost anyone, the response is a simple and resounding 'mmm'.

We all love to eat them, but pies are also wonderful things to cook for your loved ones, bringing you much well-earned praise, and isn't that just what all cooks desire and deserve?

Pies are firmly at the hands-on end of the cooking spectrum. Pastry is carefully made, flour is lightly dusted over the work surface, then the pastry is gently rolled and draped into the tin, and finally there is the art of cutting, shaping and decorating the pastry, not forgetting the all-important filling, of course. None of these stages are necessarily time-consuming or difficult, but they do simply need to be made from the heart.

Imagine a pie and invariably it'll be a pastry-topped version, either bursting with sweet fruit or a

combination of tender meat and vegetables. Happily, however, we can stretch and mould the definition of a pie to include those ones topped with fluffy butter-rich mashed potato, or others, such as tarts or quiches, with pastry only on the bottom. Not to mention pasties, pork pies, samosas and turnovers, and even a pie made from pasta. From humble to luxurious creations, and super quick to satisfyingly time-consuming recipes, in Pie! you'll find them all, both savoury and sweet. Indeed, a glorious pie for every occasion you care to think of.

Happy baking!

**Genevieve Taylor
Bristol, September 2013**

Types of Pastry

There are three principle types of pastry that are used time and again throughout this book and they are shortcrust, rough puff pastry and true puff pastry. In this section, you will find basic recipes for shortcrust and rough puff pastry, along with a few flavour variations for each. But you will find no recipe for true puff pastry, as it's just way too elaborate and time-consuming to make in the home kitchen and is not something I would ever attempt. Ready-made puff pastry is perfectly acceptable, and if you stretch to the all-butter puff pastry (and I suggest you do, as eating pastry is a once in a while treat that should be savoured), then it is simply delicious. I tend to buy all-butter puff pastry (to my mind, if you're having puff pastry, you may as well have the proper stuff), so although recipes don't specify this, I would recommend using it if you can. I also include a basic recipe for hot water crust pastry in this section, as well as a couple of basic gluten-free pastry recipes a bit further on.

Ready-made Pastry

There is a good range of ready-made pastries available and they are a pretty good substitute for homemade pastry. Many are available as blocks or ready-rolled sheets and can be bought chilled or frozen, but the pack sizes do vary a bit. All-butter varieties provide the best flavour. Pretty much all shop-bought pastries are suitable for vegetarians, and many are also suitable for vegans, although all-butter pastries (and sometimes sweet shortcrust pastry) contain butter and are therefore not vegan.

Standard pack sizes for blocks of puff and shortcrust pastry tend to be 500g (though they sometimes vary between the fresh and frozen types). Ready-rolled sheets of puff pastry can vary a little from brand to brand, but in my recipes I tend to opt for a rectangular sheet from a 320g pack. Blocks of all-butter puff pastry tend to come in two pack sizes (500g or 375g packs, depending on whether you choose frozen or fresh). Ready-rolled all-butter puff pastry sheets, and ready-rolled shortcrust pastry sheets or rounds, are commonly available. All-butter shortcrust pastry is generally obtainable in blocks and ready-rolled sheets. Sweet shortcrust pastry (including all-butter varieties) is usually available as blocks or sheets. Lighter versions of puff and shortcrust pastry, as well as flavoured puff pastry, are sometimes obtainable. Chilled and frozen filo pastry is also readily available.

Filo Pastry

Filo is another pastry that personally I would never attempt to make and ready-made filo is very acceptable. When working with filo, remember that the thin sheets dry out very easily and they will then become very hard and brittle to work with, so keep the sheets you are not working with loosely covered with a clean damp tea towel. Warka (also known as warkha, warqa or brik pastry) is a type of North African filo-type pastry that is super-thin and is traditionally used in dishes such as Brik à l'oeuf (see page 114), but it can be hard to source so I normally use filo in its place. If you want to find real warka, it's worth trying to hunt it out in Middle Eastern shops, specialist North African stores or online.

Making Your Own Pastry

Which Fat is Best to Use?

For both shortcrust and rough puff pastry, I always use just butter as the principle fat. The exception to this rule is in the Hot Water Crust Pastry (see page 8) used in the Traditional Pork Pie and Raised Game Pie recipes (see pages 34 and 100 respectively), which uses half butter and half lard. Whilst lard or vegetable shortening do add more 'shortness' (basically crumbliness), I simply prefer the taste of all-butter pastry.

Water

When adding water to bind the fat and flour in pastry, the simple rule is the colder the better, which is why I specify ice-cold water. In the depths of winter, cold water straight from the tap should be OK, but in warmer months, I add a couple of ice cubes to a glass of cold water and let it chill down for a few minutes before using.

Shortcrust Pastry

Shortcrust is the simplest and most versatile of all pastries, and at its crumbly, crispest best it is delicious, but it can become a little tough and chewy if it's overworked. The best pastry is made as quickly as possible with the minimum of handling. The basic ratio is half fat to flour, and whilst my recipe below uses 180g flour to 90g butter, the recipe can easily be scaled up or down to suit.

There are two main ways to make shortcrust pastry, the traditional rubbing-in (by hand) method that I

learnt years ago from my Mum, or the much faster and easier food processor method, which is how I make it most of the time these days. With a little care I think it is perfectly possible to make pastry in a food processor that is just as delicious as the handmade stuff. However, because food processors are so fast and efficient, there can be a tendency to over-process the dough, giving a tough and dense pastry, so just bear this in mind.

This is the basic quantity of shortcrust pastry I use to make pies, and one batch is enough to line a deep or shallow 25cm tart tin or 6 individual tartlet tins (each about 10cm diameter and 2cm deep) or 4 slightly larger ones (each about 12cm diameter and 3cm deep). A single batch is also enough for a single-crust pie top/lid. For double-crust pies, simply double the ingredient quantities to make a double batch of the basic pastry.

Makes about 325g | Takes 10 minutes to make (plus chilling)

180g plain white flour
a pinch of fine salt
90g cold butter, cut into small cubes
3–4 tbsp ice-cold water

Food Processor Method

Put the flour and salt into the food processor and whizz briefly together to mix, then add the butter cubes and pulse briefly a dozen times or so until you have coarse crumbs. If you use the pulse function in very short, sharp bursts (rather than just leave it in the ‘on’ position) to rub the fat and flour together, then I think it works more like super fast fingers and there is less chance of overdoing it. Next, you trickle in the ice-cold water, whilst pulsing all the while, just until the mixture resembles rough lumps and looks a bit like overcooked and dry scrambled eggs. Add only as much water as you need. Don’t keep processing until the mixture comes together in a big ball as that will develop the gluten in the flour too much, so be sure to stop before you get to that stage.

Tip the clumped crumbs onto a sheet of cling film and gently squeeze together into a ball without pressing too hard – little air gaps are a good thing and will add a lightness and crumbliness to the cooked shortcrust. Wrap and chill in the fridge for at least 30 minutes before rolling out.

Traditional Rubbing-in (by hand) Method

The method is essentially the same, but your fingertips and thumbs work together to literally rub the flour, salt and butter together until you have coarse crumbs. Lifting your hands out of the bowl as you rub adds air. Then once again, add just enough cold water to bring the mixture together into clumps – I find a blunt table knife is best to use here, using it to stir and cut through the crumbed mixture as you mix. Again, tip the clumped crumbs onto a sheet of cling film and squeeze gently into a ball, then wrap and chill in the fridge for at least 30 minutes before rolling out.

Flavoured Shortcrust Pastry

Sweet Shortcrust Pastry (Makes about 350g)

Add 25g icing sugar to the combined flour and butter crumbs and pulse briefly, before you add the water. To enrich even further – great for French-style patisserie tarts – add an egg yolk to the crumbed mix before you add the water. You will need a little less water (perhaps half) as the yolk adds liquid.

Parmesan Shortcrust Pastry (Makes about 350g)

Add 25g finely grated fresh Parmesan cheese to the combined flour and butter crumbs and pulse briefly, before you add the water.

Walnut Shortcrust Pastry (Makes about 365g)

In a food processor, blitz 40g walnuts until finely ground, then add the flour and salt and continue as per the basic shortcrust pastry recipe.

Rye or Wholemeal Shortcrust Pastry (Makes about 340g)

Simply follow the basic shortcrust pastry recipe, but replace half (90g) of the white flour with 90g plain wholemeal or rye flour. You may need to add a touch more water (an extra tablespoon or so) as the wholemeal and rye flours will absorb more water.

Rough Puff Pastry

Rough puff pastry is a cheat’s puff pastry. It’s not quite as rich and flaky as true puff pastry and it won’t rise as much, but it is more flaky and layered than shortcrust pastry. Rough puff pastry has a slightly higher fat content than shortcrust pastry, but far less than true puff, which can be as rich as equal parts fat to flour.

With rough puff pastry, you are rolling together layers of fat and flour, then as the fat melts in the oven, the pastry separates into even layers. I have to say, whilst I would rarely consider making shortcrust by hand when I have a food processor to do the job for me, I do really enjoy the rhythm of rolling and turning, rolling and turning, that is involved when making rough puff pastry. Perhaps the beauty of it for me is the way you can so easily flavour it with herbs, spices and cheese.

Makes about 545g | Takes 25 minutes to make (plus chilling)

**250g plain white flour, plus extra for dusting
a pinch of fine salt
175g cold butter, cut into 1cm dice
about 8 tbsp ice-cold water**

Stir the flour and salt together in a large bowl. Toss through the diced butter until each cube is coated. Add just enough ice-cold water to bring it together to form a firm dough that is not too sticky – a metal spoon is the best tool for this job. There should be no loose pieces of fat or flour left in the bowl.

Turn the pastry out onto a lightly floured work surface and roll into a rough rectangle, about 1cm thick. With a short edge nearest to you, fold the top third down towards you into the middle, and then fold the bottom third up over it – just like folding a letter. Give the pastry a quarter turn (turn it 90 degrees) so that the folded edges are at the sides, then roll out to a rectangle again (same size as before) and repeat the folding. Repeat this turning, rolling and folding process 5 more times, keeping the work surface and rolling pin lightly floured. If it is a warm day or you're working in a particularly hot kitchen, you will need to chill the pastry in the fridge for 30 minutes halfway through the rolling and folding process. This will re-solidify the butter, otherwise it will start to melt. If it's a cool day, then I normally complete the rolling and folding process in one go, working as quickly as possible. Wrap the pastry in cling film and chill in the fridge for at least 1 hour before using.

Flavoured Rough Puff Pastry

Herby Rough Puff Pastry (makes about 545g)

Stir 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs through the flour and salt, before adding the butter, then continue as per the basic rough puff pastry recipe.

**Parmesan and Sage Rough Puff Pastry
(Makes about 575g)**

Stir 25g finely grated fresh Parmesan cheese and 8–10 finely chopped fresh sage leaves through the flour and salt, before adding the butter, then continue as per the basic rough puff pastry recipe.

Sweet Rough Puff Pastry (Makes about 585g)

Stir 3 tablespoons icing sugar through the flour and salt, before adding the butter, then continue as per the basic rough puff pastry recipe. For Cinnamon Rough Puff Pastry, add a teaspoon or so of ground cinnamon with the icing sugar – this pastry is a good one to use for an apple pie.

Hot Water Crust Pastry

This is the sturdy pastry used to make the Traditional Pork Pie (see page 34) and Raised Game Pie (see page 100). With no rubbing in of fat and no rolling out, it's a really easy pastry to make, just make sure you cut the fat into dice so it melts quickly as the water comes to the boil – if the fat lumps are big, they take too long to melt and the water can evaporate too much.

Makes about 595g | Takes 10 minutes to make (plus chilling)

**300g plain white flour
1 tsp fine salt
1 egg
110ml cold water
60g lard, cut into 1cm dice
60g butter, cut into 1cm dice**

Measure the flour into a mixing bowl and stir through the salt. Make a well in the centre and crack in the egg, then use the empty shell to flick a little of the flour over the surface of the egg so it is hidden. Put the measured cold water and the lard and butter into a small saucepan and set over a medium heat. Stir until the fats melt and the water is just coming up to the boil, then remove from the heat and pour this hot mixture over the flour and egg in the bowl. Mix continuously with a metal spoon until the mixture comes together as a ball.

Tip onto the work surface and knead briefly for a minute or so, then wrap tightly in cling film, forming it into a fat sausage shape as you wrap. Chill in the fridge for 30–45 minutes to firm up before using, but don't over-chill or it will become very hard to work with.

Rolling Out the Pastry and Lining Your Tin

Whether you are rolling shortcrust, puff or rough puff pastry, a little flour dusted over the work surface is essential, but too much will dry out the pastry, so just dust over as much as you need, remembering you can always add more.

Rolling pastry is so much easier if you start with the rough shape you want to finish with, so if you need a big circle, start by pressing your ball of pastry into a thick circular shape before you begin to roll. To keep it circular, roll no more than 2 or 3 times in one direction, before turning it through 90 degrees (a quarter turn) and rolling it in the other direction, otherwise you will end up with an oval. The same principles apply if you want a square or a rectangle shape – simply press the pastry into roughly the right shape before rolling. Remember, if you are rolling a rectangle, you will need to roll the pastry a few more times in one direction to keep the shape from turning into a square.

If you are lining small or individual tins, then cut the pastry into 6 pieces (or however many pieces the recipe calls for) and roll each piece into a ball to begin with, then roll out each one into a circle. I find this method far easier and much less wasteful than rolling out a sheet and cutting it into circles, then having to re-roll the trimmings to fill all the tins.

Sometimes cracks will inevitably appear and it pays to patch and push them together as you go along, rather than wait until you are left with a gaping hole that will be harder to deal with. If necessary, stick bits together using a dab of cold water to firmly seal any joins. Whilst cracks are annoying, it's worth noting that the pastry that is hardest to work with often seems to be the crispest, crumbliest and most delicious to eat, so take heart from what might seem like a failure at the time!

The thickness of the pastry is important and the ideal is to roll as thinly as you can – about 3mm should be your goal. Think of the pastry as a tasty container – it's the filling that should shine through and not be overshadowed by a thick and quite possibly stodgy pastry. A 3mm thickness of pastry is typical for most of the recipes in this book, but a few specific recipes do call for a slightly thicker rolled pastry – about 4mm or 5mm – such as the Smoked Gammon and Minted Pea Pies (see page 32), Roast Beef, Sweet Potato and Horseradish Pie (see page 38),

Borlotti Bean, Squash, Red Pepper and Chard Pie with Goat's Cheese (see page 80), Traditional Pork Pie (see page 34), Raised Game Pie (see page 100) and Cornish Pasties (see page 127). These particular pies need a more sturdy crust to encase a robust filling.

Chilling and Resting the Pastry

When I first learnt to cook at school (in the days when we all still did home economics!) we were always told that cold hands are best for pastry making. Whilst this is probably true, and hot sweaty hands are definitely a no no, resting the pastry in the fridge after making it is definitely more important.

When you incorporate fat into flour, you will be developing the gluten – a protein molecule – in the flour. The more you work the flour, the more elastic and stretchy the dough will become. This is obviously a desirable thing when making bread and it's why we use high gluten or strong bread flour, but with pastry, overworking will give you a tough and chewy crust. Chilling and resting allows the gluten time to relax before baking, which helps to minimise this problem. Therefore, standard plain flour is used for pastry making, although there is one pastry recipe in this book that does use strong flour and that is the Cornish Pasties recipe (see page 127) – this is the traditional way with this particular recipe, because the pastry needs to be tough and robust to keep the filling inside during a relatively long bake. A light crumbly short pastry would just not be up to the job with these pasties.

Purists tend to say that the best pastry needs to be relaxed and chilled both before and after rolling. I have to say my patience normally gets the better of me once I've rolled the pastry out, and I rarely chill it again once it's in the tin. The exception is if I'm making pastry on a very hot day and the fat has started to melt during rolling and shaping. Or, when I am making lots of little tarts, where the shrinkage factor would be very noticeable, not to mention annoying, when you can get hardly any filling in.

Trimming and Finishing Pastry Edges

You will inevitably need to trim up your pastry so it fits neatly in the tin, and in the case of puff pastry, straight

and neat edges will allow for a better rise (or ‘puff’) in the oven during baking, so a small sharp knife is the ideal tool to use.

With blind-baked pastry tart cases (see page 10), some chefs like to bake them first then trim after, and whilst this can create a lovely neat finish, personally I find it a bit fiddly as it can create cracks if the pastry is particularly brittle, so this is not the way I recommend doing it. My way is to line the tin, making sure the pastry is really well pressed into the base and up the sides of the tin, with the excess hanging over the top edges. I then take the rolling pin and give it a swift roll across the top of the tin, neatly trimming off the excess pastry. Finally, I use my thumb and forefinger to pinch around and squeeze the pastry just a little higher than the top of the tin (a couple of millimetres or so) – this will allow for the inevitable bit of shrinkage as it bakes and creates a nice neat finish.

When making a double crust pie, or when sealing the edges of an individual pie or pasty, it’s nice to crimp the edges together in wavy lines. Whilst not essential by any means (and as long as you have sealed the two edges together firmly, a straight finish is perfectly adequate), crimping the edges does add a nice finishing touch.

Glazing and Decorating Pastry

For any recipe where pastry is placed on top of the pie rather than just underneath it, it is a good idea to glaze it so it bakes to a lovely, shiny golden brown colour. The traditional way is to lightly brush the pastry with beaten egg. This is no doubt the best way for a lovely finish, but I find it can sometimes be a touch wasteful – even a sharing-size pie only seems to use about half an egg to glaze. So, for lots of pies, I tend to glaze with a half and half mixture of milk whisked with oil (olive or vegetable oil are both ideal). It gives a nice glaze, not quite so shiny as egg, but good all the same. I do sometimes use an egg glaze though, particularly for a ‘special’ pie – one that has taken plenty of time and love to prepare – or when I’m baking lots of pies, so I don’t waste the egg. Another good glaze is lightly beaten plain egg white, which freezes brilliantly, so if I’m making a recipe that uses lots of egg yolks, I often freeze the whites in ice cube trays so I can pop one out and defrost it to use for a pie glaze.

I have to say I don’t particularly go in for lots of cut pastry decorations on the tops of my pies – leaves,

flowers, chickens or whatever – it’s just not really my style (and my kids would be deprived of their jam tart making!). What I do like to do though, for some savoury pies, is to sprinkle over a few flakes of sea salt, or perhaps some cumin seeds, dried herbs or a pinch of smoked paprika, and for some sweet pies, a sprinkling of caster sugar is ideal – just a small easy finishing touch that will remind people that what they are eating is most definitely and deliciously homemade.

Blind-baking

Blind-baking or baking blind simply means baking a pastry case empty. The pastry case is lined with non-stick baking paper and the base is weighed down as it cooks by filling the case with ceramic baking beans, dried beans or dried rice. I have a box of dried chickpeas that are used solely for this purpose and they have been in and out of the oven hundreds of times and are still going strong.

Sometimes a recipe states you should prick the base of the case before blind-baking. I have to say I have tried it both ways many times and have concluded that providing the case is well weighted with beans, it makes little difference to the end result. However, it is something my kids enjoy doing, so if they are ‘helping’ me, I often let them do a bit of fork stabbing. The exception to the rule in this book is the Egg Custard Tarts recipe (see page 137), where I have forgone the lining of each muffin hole with paper and beans in favour of a good prick all over with a fork.

How to Make a Deep or Shallow 25cm Blind-baked Shortcrust Pastry Tart Case

These instructions are for blind-baking a deep or shallow 25cm shortcrust pastry tart case until it is fully cooked, which I use in a good number of recipes throughout this book.

For this, you’ll need a deep or shallow 25cm plain or fluted loose-based tart tin.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6. It’s also a good idea to place a heavy baking sheet on a shelf in the oven to heat up – that way the base of the pastry gets an instant burst of bottom heat to start the cooking process off.

Once you have lined the tin with shortcrust pastry, line the pastry case with non-stick baking paper and then fill it with baking beans, spreading them out evenly. Slide the tin onto the hot baking sheet in the

oven and bake for 20 minutes. Remove the paper and beans, then bake for a further 5 minutes to cook the pastry through completely. Remove from the oven and use as required in any recipe that requires a deep or shallow 25cm blind-baked shortcrust pastry tart case.

Gluten-free Pastry

So many people these days suffer from gluten intolerance or food allergies that it feels very important to include a couple of gluten-free recipes in this book. They are not as fail-safe as regular wheat flour pastry and they are softer and harder to work with. However, they do work well, which is brilliant news if you can't eat gluten but still want to eat pie. One thing to note is that I find these pastries to be most successful when they are blind-baked before filling, so this really makes them only suitable for open tarts and quiches rather than for traditional double-crust pies. They just don't seem to be sturdy enough to support and encase a filling when cooked from raw.

Gluten-free Shortcrust Pastry

Makes about 330g | Takes 10 minutes to make (plus chilling)

85g gluten-free plain white flour blend (such as Doves Farm)

85g cornflour

a pinch of fine salt

85g cold butter, cut into small cubes

1 egg

1 tbsp ice-cold water

Make this pastry either by hand or in a food processor, in the same way that you would make regular shortcrust pastry, adding the egg and water once the flours, salt and butter have been combined to make coarse crumbs. Wrap, then chill the pastry really well after making (for at least 1 hour in the fridge) to firm it up before using.

Instead of rolling out the pastry on a flour-dusted work surface, roll it out between 2 sheets of cling film using a gentle even pressure, as this pastry is quite soft. Line a tart tin with the pastry, using the rolling pin to support the pastry as you transfer it to the tin, trim the edges, then re-chill it in the fridge for 30 minutes. Once chilled, line with non-stick baking paper and baking beans (see page 10) and blind-bake

in a preheated oven at 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6 for 20 minutes. Remove the paper and beans, then bake for a further 5 minutes or until completely cooked through. Remove from the oven and leave to cool completely before using in a suitable recipe of your choice.

You can also make a sweet version of this recipe by stirring 25g icing sugar through the combined (rubbed-in) flour and butter crumbs, before you add the egg and water.

Gluten-free Almond and Polenta Sweet Pastry

A delicate but rich gluten-free pastry that might be slightly trickier to ease from the tin, this is a great one to use as a base for sweet tarts. With this sort of pastry, I would definitely recommend letting the cooked tart cool completely in the tin before trying to remove it. Once the filling is cold it will be sturdier and will help to support the rather fragile pastry.

Makes about 405g | Takes 10 minutes to make (plus freezing and chilling)

125g ground almonds

125g fine polenta

2 tbsp caster sugar

100g cold butter, cut into small cubes

1–2 tbsp ice-cold water

You can make this pastry by hand or in a food processor, using the same method as for the Gluten-free Shortcrust Pastry (see pages 11–12). Again, this pastry is quite soft, so shape it into a log wrapped in cling film and freeze for 30 minutes, then slice it into 4mm-thick rounds. Arrange the rounds of pastry in the tin, as closely packed together as possible, then press the joins together using your hands. Smooth with the back of a spoon and chill in the fridge for a further 30 minutes or so to firm up the pastry once more.

Blind-bake following the instructions for the Gluten-free Shortcrust Pastry (see pages 11–12), but initially bake for 15 minutes only (at 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6). Remove from the oven, then remove the paper and beans, carefully pressing down any pastry that has become a little stuck to the paper as it can be slightly sticky (the back of a metal spoon is handy here). Bake for a further 10 minutes or until completely cooked through. Due to the high nut content, the top edges may start to catch and colour too much. If this

happens, press strips of foil over the edges to protect them and prevent burning (this is a bit tricky to do but it's worth it). Remove from the oven and leave to cool completely before using in a suitable recipe of your choice.

Using up Leftover Pastry and Pastry Trimmings

With the best will in the world there will always be a little wastage as you trim up the pastry to fit your tin or dish. Jam tarts are a favourite way of using up trimmings in my house. Don't let your imagination stop there though. Another favourite is a lightly spread layer of Marmite over a rough square of pastry (shortcrust, puff or rough puff are all suitable), followed by a sprinkle of grated Cheddar cheese. Roll the whole lot up like a sausage, then cut into slices and place on a baking sheet (cut-side up). Bake in a preheated oven at 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6 for around 12–15 minutes or until cooked and golden, and you will have a very tasty tray of cheesy whirls. Alternatively, do the grown-up thing and spread the pastry with a little black olive and anchovy tapenade before rolling, slicing and baking.

The Importance of Cooling Fillings

Pastry performs best, that is it cooks to crisp and crumbly or golden and flaky (depending on whether you are using shortcrust, rough puff or true puff pastry), when it stays as cold as possible before it goes in the oven. Pastry does not benefit from sitting around sweating at room temperature and if it comes into contact with hot fillings, then the fat within it will start to melt instantly causing your pastry to become soft, collapsing and unworkable. Therefore, it's really important that all fillings are completely cold before they come into contact with raw pastry. However, once a pastry tart case has been blind-baked (see page 10), then it is fine if the filling is on the warm side of room temperature when it is added to the pastry case. One exception to this is with the Caramelised Red Onion, Cream and Stilton Quiche recipe (see page 76), because the onions are so scorching hot, they need a generous cooling period before they come into contact with the egg custard, otherwise they will begin to cook it instantly on contact.

Notes on Ingredients

Eggs

Throughout the book, I have used large eggs. However, the pie recipes throughout this book are pretty forgiving, so if you use medium eggs it won't really critically alter how a recipe works.

Butter

In many recipes I specify unsalted butter and the reason for this is simple – the salt in salted butter means it has a tendency to burn more easily. So, whenever a recipe calls for frying (gently or otherwise), I always suggest using unsalted butter.

For the pastry recipes, or for when butter is added more as a flavouring, in mashed potato for example, the choice of butter is yours to make.

A Note About Timings

Throughout the book, the same system of working out the total preparation (to make) and cooking (to cook) timings (given towards the top of each recipe) has been applied to keep all the recipes consistent. When making the recipes, any precooking is included in the total/overall cooking time given and not in the preparation time. The preparation time (or 'to make' time) includes the time spent, for example, chopping, stirring, rolling out pastry, lining tins, assembling a pie, and so on. The cooking time (or 'to cook' time) refers to the time when heat of any sort (hob and/or oven heat) is applied to the ingredients (for example, when frying, steaming, boiling, baking, etc). In the vast majority of cases, when using the basic pastry recipes from this chapter in the pie recipes throughout the book, the time taken to prepare and chill (and blind-bake, where applicable) these pastries is not included in the overall preparation (and cooking) times given in the pie recipes.

Oven Temperatures

All the recipes in this book have been tested in an electric fan oven, but temperatures for conventional (non-fan) electric ovens and gas ovens are also given.

Storing and Freezing Pies

Many pies freeze brilliantly, and what could be nicer than baking two pies and tucking one away in the freezer for a day when cooking is not top of your agenda? Particularly with what I call the ‘traditional’ meat pies – chicken, beef, venison – basically the ones where you braise or stew the meat over a long period of time, it makes perfect sense to me to batch cook both the filling and the pastry and assemble the dish to the point of baking. If you know you are planning to freeze a whole pie, I suggest freezing it assembled but with the pastry uncooked (providing your pastry wasn’t frozen to begin with), to get the best results. If you are using defrosted pastry, then you should always bake the pie before it becomes safe to freeze it again. It is also possible to freeze leftovers of cooked pies. In all cases, I recommend freezing pies for up to 3 months, as the flavours will start to deteriorate over a longer period of time.

Some pies simply don’t freeze brilliantly and below is a list of those I wouldn’t recommend freezing. The reasons are varied, but in most cases it is simply that the main ingredients don’t defrost to a pleasing texture. So although you could freeze them they would be far from their best on defrosting – these include all the mashed potato-topped pies and those with a large proportion of carrot, celery or broccoli, and I learnt to my peril that sardines never ever benefit from freezing! So, don’t try to freeze the pies on these pages: pages 18, 20, 21 (filling fine, but not topping), 25, 28 (filling fine, but not topping), 31 (filling fine, but not topping); 46 (filling fine, but not topping); 49, 51, 54, 57, 59, 64, 66, 67, 69, 74, 79, 82, 85, 88, 104, 105, 108, 110, 113, 114, 122, 133, 135, 136, 137, 140, 141, 143, 144, 146, 149, 157.

Wrapping Pies

Wrapping food well is essential when freezing and I always tend to double or even triple wrap food, including pies, to make sure there is no chance of ‘freezer burn’ (when food gets a little frostbitten). With cooked or uncooked pastry pies, including cooked chilled sweet pies (such as Key Lime Pie, see page 145), I find a layer of greaseproof paper wrapped around the pie first is good as it won’t stick to the pastry (or filling), followed by a layer of foil. Finally, I seal the lot inside a large labelled freezer bag. Individual portions of pies also freeze well in airtight boxes.

Freezing Raw Pastry

Uncooked pastry (including shortcrust, sweet shortcrust, puff, rough puff and filo) freezes superbly, so if I am making my own pastry and there is a little room in my freezer, I generally make a double batch and freeze half to make an easy pie another day. Wrap the pastry well in cling film, then seal it in a freezer bag and label. Freeze for up to 3 months, then defrost in the fridge overnight or for a couple of hours or so at a cool room temperature.

Defrosting Pies

When defrosting pies, it’s best to leave them in the fridge overnight so they can defrost gently and evenly. If you don’t have time to do that, you can leave the pie at a cool room temperature for a few hours, but do check that it has defrosted completely in the middle before you start to cook or reheat it. Defrost cooked chilled sweet pies thoroughly in the fridge overnight before serving.

Cooking and Reheating Defrosted Pies

If you are defrosting an assembled but uncooked pie, once it has completely defrosted, simply follow the cooking instructions given in the recipe. Do bear in mind though that if the pie is still very cold throughout, it may take an extra 5 minutes or so than the cooking time given in the recipe.

If you are simply reheating a defrosted cooked pie, once it has completely defrosted, reheat it in the oven at the original temperature it was cooked at until piping hot throughout. For a large pie (that makes several portions), this should be about 20 minutes. For smaller individual pies including pasties, tartlets and so on, the reheating time will be less, about 10–15 minutes. However, it’s tricky to be precise with timings here, so the best way to check if the reheated pie is piping hot throughout is to pierce right into the centre with a metal skewer and hold it there for a generous 10 seconds or so. Remove it and immediately touch it gently to your bottom lip. If you can’t hold it there beyond a second or two then the pie is hot enough to eat safely. If you are reheating a cooked pie, you may need to cover it loosely with foil partway through reheating if it is showing signs of becoming too brown.

FAMILY FAVOURITES

A generous and steaming pie placed in the centre of the family dinner table is a thing of great beauty, and something that will bring the cook a glow of heady satisfaction. Somehow the world feels better when you are presented with a pie and there is no better culinary gift you can offer to your nearest and dearest. In this chapter, you will find family-size pies from which to dig out a great spoonful or cut a generous slice, plus some individual pies to enjoy too. These are the pies your family will be begging you to make for them time and time again.