

Strawberry Blueberry Tarts – makes 8 individual tarts



Pie Dough for two crust pie – in two separate balls chilled

Note: I make mine using white whole wheat flour and a combination of high fat vegan butter (Earth Balance or Miyokos) and Crisco (I know, I know, not so healthy, but I so rarely eat dessert and it truly makes the best pie crusts). In the interest of full disclosure, I sometimes use all Crisco.....

This is the recipe from Mary Meade's Country Cookbook, one of my grandmother's, published in 1964. It always results in a perfect flaky pie crust.

You needn't make your own pie crust, but it is more fun, and you'll be proud of pastry you've made yourself. It will taste ever so much better than anything out of a package! Lard is the perfect shortening for pastry; it's the shortest shortening, and it has good flavor. But the fluffed-up shortenings are good, too, and more generally available. If you do use lard, measure just a bit skimpily, a teaspoonful less for a double crust, a tablespoonful less in each cup for the following big recipe which makes four 2-crusters. Otherwise your pie crust may be so tender it crumbles.

There are a half dozen other good recipes and mixing methods, but I am going to tell you about only one—mine.

FLAKY PASTRY

You may keep a pastry mix on hand, or freeze rolled-out crusts with waxed paper between them, so here are recipes for one 2-crufter, and four 2-crust pies. They will make double that many single 9-inch crusts.

ONE PIE

2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup shortening
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water

FOUR PIES

9 cups flour
4 teaspoons salt
3 cups shortening
1 cup water

Spoon flour into cup to measure, and level off. Mix flour and salt in mixing bowl, add shortening and cut it in with a pastry blender, or with your fingertips, until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add water, tossing with a fork to dampen evenly. Don't add water all at once or you'll have wet dough in spots. You may need an extra sprinkle of water. Press dough into a ball.

Divide the dough in half, in the smaller recipe; in 8 parts, in the larger. Roll each part into a circle between two sheets of waxed paper, making it large enough to fit your pie pan.

Berry Mixture

3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups mixed berries – if using strawberries suggest cutting them into smaller pieces
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tablespoon cornstarch
3 Tablespoon granulated sugar
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons vanilla
Slivered almonds (other nuts fine too, chopped)
Nondairy milk for brushing

Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Mix the berries with the cornstarch, sugar, vanilla in a bowl until combined, place in refrigerator until ready for them

Flatten your first chilled pie crust ball down and then roll out (between two sheets of wax paper) into a 12" circle approximately. Cut that into 4 pieces (circular or just squarish, doesn't really matter). If you want to do 6 inch circles and have a large cutter, you could do that-I just rough cut four pieces the rolled edges are uneven, doesn't matter. Place each dough piece on one of the baking sheets. Don't worry if they are close together you are going to fold up the edges. Repeat with other dough ball. You should now have 8 pieces total on two or three baking sheets.

Place about ¼ cup of the berry mixture in the center of a dough piece, try to leave excess juice in bowl. Leave a border and then fold the dough edges up over the berries leaving some berries showing in the middle. Use your hands to pinch the dough where it may crack just sealing it around the berries, tight and compact.

Brush the edges of dough with nondairy milk and sprinkle with nuts.

Put the baking sheets with tarts into the fridge for at least 30 minutes to an hour, up to 4 hours. This helps them maintain shape.

Bake in preheated 375-degree oven for about 28 minutes until edges are browned. Let cool a bit and serve warm or room temperature.

Serve with vegan (or not) ice cream.

Note: while making individual ones is a nice presentation, making two large ones is easier and looks great. This recipe would make 2 large tarts, you could half the berry recipe, make one and save the other dough ball for future. Or, if you used a store-bought pie crust, you just use one and half the berry mixture.