

Cleo Coyle's Sweet Pie or Tart Crust

“Pâte Sucrée”

Recipe (c) 2009 by Alice Alfonsi who writes as Cleo Coyle with her husband Marc Cerasini

Servings: Makes two 9-inch pie crusts* or one 10-inch pie, tart, or deep dish pie crust

Ingredients:

3/4 cup unsalted butter (1-1/2 stick, softened)
1/2 cup confectioners' (powdered) sugar
2 large egg yolks
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 teaspoon salt
2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour (measure after sifting)

** Note: Because dough will store up to 2 months in the freezer, I make the full recipe, divide dough into 2 thick discs, roll and bake one right away and wrap the 2nd in plastic and foil to store in freezer until the next time I bake.*

Step 1—Make dough: Using an electric mixer, cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add egg yolks, vanilla, salt, and flour. Mix only enough to incorporate elements and form a dough (do not over-mix or dough will be tough). Use fingers to form 2 thick discs, wrap and chill for 1–2 hours or until dough is firm. (The dough can also be chilled overnight, stored up to 3 days in refrigerator, or 2 months in freezer.)

Step 2—Roll dough: Remove dough from fridge; it will be firm to very hard. Allow to warm until pliable. Roll out dough to about 1/8-inch in thickness. To avoid using excess flour while rolling (which can toughen crust), I simply roll dough between 2 sheets of parchment paper—no excess flour needed. The dough will stick to the paper as I roll it out, but I transfer the whole thing to the fridge to chill for 10 minutes. This firms up the dough again and the paper will easily peel away.

Step 3—Flute, prick, chill: Place rolled out dough in pie plate or pan. Trim to fit. Patch torn areas with extra dough, and create fluted edge by pinching dough between fingers. Use a fork to prick bottom of unbaked shell—this prevents bubbling. Now chill the unbaked crust for 15 minutes in the refrigerator.



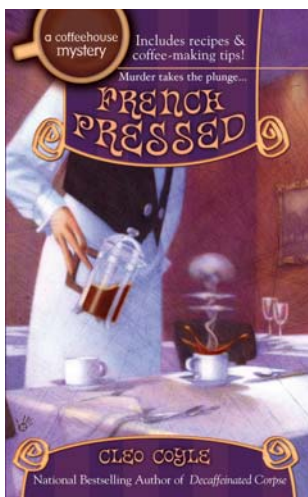
Step 4–Bake: Preheat oven to 375° F.

To “blind” bake an empty crust, you must weight it to keep it from shrinking. This is very easy...

I simply place a flat-bottomed paper coffee filter* on the bottom of the uncooked crust and weight it with 1 cup of dried kidney beans. (See my photos.)

Bake the weighted crust for 10 minutes at 375° F. Remove from oven and use a spoon to scoop out all beans. Then gently peel back and remove the coffee filter. Now return the naked crust to oven for another 5–8 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool before filling.

* If you don't have a flat-bottomed paper coffee filter, simply trim a piece of parchment paper to fit your pan. In a pinch, you can even use aluminum foil, but the paper coffee filter or parchment paper will give you better results.



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