

baking school in-depth

AUGUST 2025

THE ART OF THE ALL-BUTTER CRUST

This master class in all-butter piecrust teaches both handmade and food processor methods, culminating in the ultimate savory quiche

Our test kitchen made dozens of versions of this pie dough using both the food processor and the traditional by-hand method. The processor was efficient, yes—but the handmade method consistently yielded a dough with more-pronounced flake, deeper flavor, and superior structure. And when you understand why this method works, it becomes more instinctive each time you make it.

Though the food processor has become a modern-day shortcut, the handmade method remains the gold standard in both texture and technique—and it's the one we recommend here. It offers a deeper understanding of how flour absorbs fat, how hydration shifts feel, and how temperature shapes outcome. More importantly, it gives you control.



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INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

The beauty of this quiche lies in the balance between its crisp, deeply golden crust and the soft custard filling. Understanding the role of each ingredient—from decadent cream to cold butter—helps ensure a flaky shell, a silky interior, and a slice that holds together beautifully.

ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR: The pillar of the all-butter crust, flour provides the structure that holds everything together while allowing for a tender, flaky bite. When handled gently and kept cold, it helps form layers that crisp beautifully in the oven.

UNSALTED BUTTER: Butter is the star of the crust—cut in cold and left in visible bits, it creates steam pockets as it bakes, yielding a flaky, golden shell. Its fat content also contributes richness and that signature melt-in-your-mouth texture.

ICE WATER: A small but vital addition that brings the dough together without activating too much gluten, ice water keeps the butter cold and helps create a cohesive dough that's easy to roll out but still tender.

KOSHER SALT: Used in both the crust and custard, salt balances richness and enhances flavor. In the crust, it seasons the dough subtly; in the custard, it deepens the taste of the eggs and cream and brings savory fillings into sharper focus.

HEAVY WHIPPING CREAM: The cream gives the custard its luxurious texture. With a high fat content, it bakes into a smooth, rich filling that's silky without feeling too dense.

EGGS: Eggs are the structural foundation of the custard. When baked, their proteins gently coagulate to create a sliceable filling that still feels soft and tender. They also lend a delicate golden hue and natural richness.

DESIRED FILLINGS (CHEESE, MEATS, VEGETABLES, HERBS, ETC.): These are what make the quiche endlessly adaptable. Cheese melts into the custard for creaminess and flavor; vegetables add sweetness or earthiness; fresh herbs brighten the overall profile; bacon, sausage, or ham brings savory richness and a smoky depth. Precooking meats and parcooking vegetables ensures they don't release excess moisture into the custard during baking.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

From mixing a flaky all-butter crust to gently setting a creamy custard, these essential tools help you work with precision and ease so you can focus on flavor, structure, and technique

FOOD PROCESSOR: For the food processor version of the All-Butter Piecrust, this tool quickly and evenly cuts butter into the flour, ensuring a crumbly, pea-size consistency while keeping everything cold—crucial for a flaky crust. (Pictured: [Cuisinart 14-Cup 50th Anniversary Edition Food Processor](#).)

PASTRY BLENDER: Used for the handmade version of the piecrust, the pastry blender gives you control while cutting cold butter into the flour without warming it with your hands, resulting in the same flaky layers as the processor. (Pictured: [Williams Sonoma Olivewood Pastry Blender](#).)

GLASS MIXING BOWLS: Essential for organizing and separating your steps, use large bowls for whisking the custard, medium ones for prepping fillings, and small bowls for measured salt and pepper. Glass is also nonreactive and lets you see mixing progress clearly. (Pictured: [Glass Mixing Bowl 10-Piece Set](#).)

ROLLING PIN: A handled pin provides better leverage and control, which is especially helpful for getting uniform thickness and avoiding tears in the dough. (Pictured: [Patisserie Rolling Pin](#).)

RIMMED BAKING SHEET: This catches any spills or butter runoff from the parbaking crust and final bake. It also stabilizes the pie pan when transferring to and from the oven, especially helpful when the custard is liquid. (Pictured: [Williams Sonoma Goldtouch® Pro Nonstick Half Sheet](#).)

DEEP-DISH PIE PAN: The right depth ensures the custard and fillings have enough room to bake without overflowing. Deep-dish also gives that satisfying custard-to-crust ratio that defines a good quiche. (Pictured: [Williams Sonoma Goldtouch® Pro Nonstick Pie Dish](#).)



PIE WEIGHTS: These prevent the crust from puffing or shrinking during parbaking, helping it maintain shape and structure before the custard goes in. (Pictured: [Pie Weights Jar](#).)

WHISK: Whisking the cream, eggs, salt, and pepper creates a homogenous custard that bakes up smooth and silky. A balloon whisk works best for combining without incorporating too much air. (Pictured: [GIR Get It Right Ultimate Whisk in Light Blue](#).)

MEASURING CUP WITH SPOUT: A liquid-measuring cup with a spout is ideal for pouring the custard into the parbaked crust without spills. (Pictured: [OXO 3-Piece Angled Measuring Cups](#).)

SILICONE SPATULA: Great for scraping every last bit of cream mixture from the bowl and gently folding fillings if needed, a silicone spatula is flexible and nonstick, perfect for custards and soft vegetables. (Pictured: [Get It Right Ultimate Spatula in Slate](#).)

SCISSORS: Kitchen scissors are used to trim excess parchment and foil cleanly and are helpful when shaping foil to tent around the piecrust edges to prevent excess browning. (Pictured: [Zwilling Multi-Purpose Kitchen Shears in Red](#).)



Classic Quiche

CLASSIC QUICHE

Makes 1 (9-inch) quiche

This quiche starts with a deeply golden, all-butter crust. It's the vessel for a classic custard: eggs for structure, cream for richness, and whatever herbs, vegetables, meat, and cheese you have on hand to round it out. It's all about technique: Parbake it and then bake low and slow so the custard sets gently without curdling. A slice served warm is golden and just set at the center, its edge crisp and bronzed. It's adaptable, elegant, and deeply satisfying—exactly what a quiche should be.

All-purpose flour, for dusting

All-Butter Piecrust (recipe follows)

1½ cups (360 grams) heavy whipping cream

6 large eggs (300 grams)

1½ teaspoons (4.5 grams) kosher salt

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper (optional)

2 cups assorted fillings (see Note)

1. Spray a 9-inch deep-dish pie pan with baking spray with flour.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll All-Butter Piecrust into a 14-inch circle. Transfer to prepared pan, pressing into bottom and up sides. Trim excess dough, fold edges under, and crimp as desired. Freeze until firm, about 20 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
4. Top prepared crust with a piece of parchment paper, letting excess extend over edges of pan. Add pie weights. Place on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet.
5. Bake until crust is mostly dry and set, about 35 minutes. Carefully remove parchment and weights, and bake until inside of crust is dry and edges are lightly browned, about 5 minutes more. Let crust cool completely. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F (170°C).
6. In a large bowl, whisk together cream, eggs, salt, and pepper (if using) until well combined.
7. Spread desired fillings in bottom of crust. (See Note.) Pour cream mixture all over filling. Carefully return pie pan to foil-lined baking sheet. Tent edges of crust with foil.
8. Bake until filling is set and top is golden brown, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool for 20 minutes. Best served warm.

Note: Meat should be fully cooked and vegetables should be parcooked before adding to crust.

All-Butter Piecrust

Makes 1 (9-inch) deep-dish crust

1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt

½ cup (113 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed

¼ cup (60 grams) ice water, plus more as needed

By Hand

1. In a large bowl, whisk together flour and salt. Add cold butter; toss together until butter is well coated. Using a pastry blender, cut in cold butter until mixture is crumbly and largest butter pieces are pea-size and well incorporated into flour mixture, stopping to scrape large chunks of butter from pastry blender.
2. Make a well in center of mixture; add ¼ cup (60 grams) ice water. Using a rubber spatula, stir just until a dough begins to form. Mixture may appear crumbly, but it should be moist and hold together when pinched. If mixture is dry and falls apart when pinched, stir in ice water, 1 tablespoon (15 grams) at a time, just until it holds together. Dough should not be overly wet and sticky.

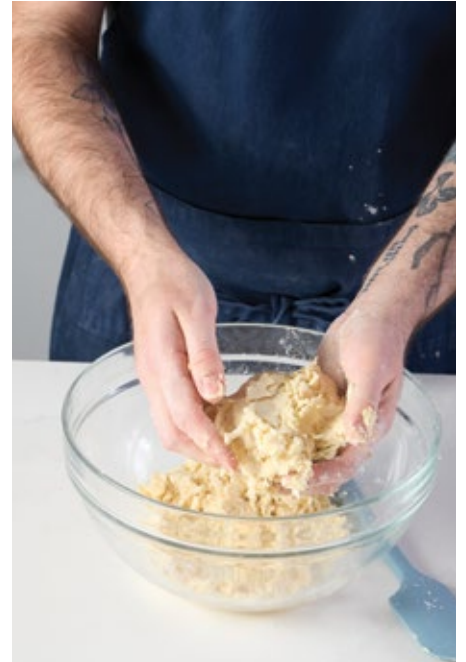
Food Processor

1. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse flour and salt until combined. Add cold butter, and pulse until mixture is crumbly and butter is pea-size.
2. With processor running, add ¼ cup (60 grams) ice water in a slow, steady stream just until dough comes together. Mixture may appear crumbly, but it should be moist and hold together when pinched. If mixture is dry and falls apart when pinched, add ice water, 1 tablespoon (15 grams) at a time, just until it holds together.
3. Turn out dough onto a clean surface, and shape into a disk. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 2 days, or freeze for up to 3 months. Let frozen dough thaw in refrigerator overnight before using.

PREPARING THE ALL-BUTTER PIECRUST

Flaky, tender, and deeply golden, this classic piecrust relies on cold butter and minimal handling.

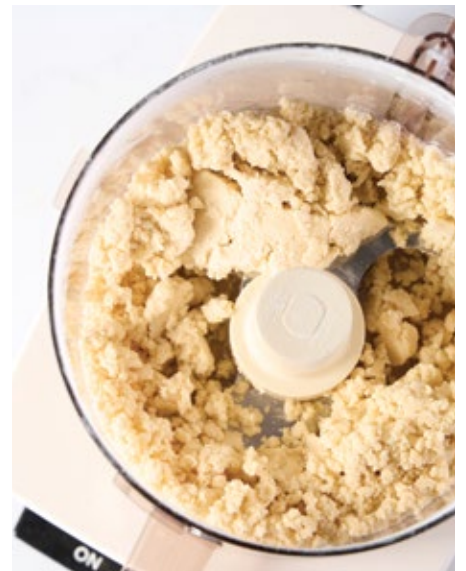
BY HAND



In a large bowl, whisk together flour and salt. Add cold butter; toss together until butter is well coated. Using a pastry blender, cut in cold butter until mixture is crumbly and largest butter pieces are pea-size and well incorporated into flour mixture, stopping to scrape large chunks of butter from pastry blender.

Make a well in center of mixture; add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 grams) ice water. Using a rubber spatula, stir just until a dough begins to form. Mixture may appear crumbly, but it should be moist and hold together when pinched. If mixture is dry and falls apart when pinched, stir in ice water, 1 tablespoon (15 grams) at a time, just until it holds together. Dough should not be overly wet and sticky.

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ROLLING OUT DOUGH

Don't rush the process. Roll the chilled dough to a uniform thickness so it bakes evenly. Give the dough a quarter-turn every 5 to 6 passes with the rolling pin so it doesn't stick to the surface and rolls out to an even shape.



On a lightly floured surface, roll All-Butter Piecrust into a 14-inch circle.

TRANSFERRING TO PIE PAN

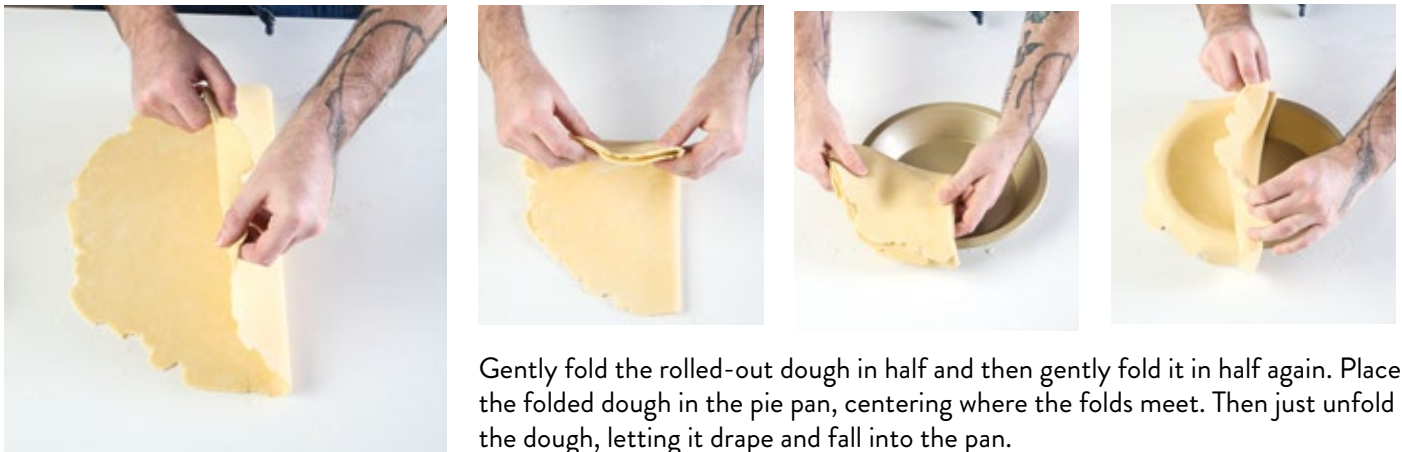
Here are two easy methods to transfer the rolled-out dough into the pie pan. Let the dough drape and fall into the pie pan rather than stretching it to fit; stretching will cause the dough to shrink back, which leads to cracks.

ROLL UP



Pick up the edges of the rolled-out dough farthest from you, and drape it over the rolling pin. Keep rolling up the dough onto the pin and then drape the loose end of the dough into the pie pan, unrolling the dough as you go.

FOLD UP



Gently fold the rolled-out dough in half and then gently fold it in half again. Place the folded dough in the pie pan, centering where the folds meet. Then just unfold the dough, letting it drape and fall into the pan.

Trim excess dough, fold edges under, and crimp as desired. Freeze until firm, about 20 minutes.



PARBAKING THE CRUST



A crisp, flaky crust starts with a thorough parbake. Pie weights keep the shell from puffing, and a second bake sets the base so the custard won't soak through.

Top prepared crust with a piece of parchment paper, letting excess extend over edges of pan. Add pie weights. Place on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet.

Bake until crust is mostly dry and set, about 35 minutes. Carefully remove parchment and weights, and bake until inside of crust is dry and edges are lightly browned, about 5 minutes more. Let crust cool completely. Reduce oven temperature to 325°F (170°C).

MAKING THE CUSTARD, ADDING THE FILLING & BAKING THE QUICHE

The custard brings richness and structure. Whisk the eggs and cream gently to avoid air bubbles, which can lead to cracks or uneven baking. Add your fillings first—think breakfast meats, vegetables, cheese, herbs—and then pour in the custard. Baking on a baking sheet makes for easy handling, and tenting protects your golden crust from overbaking. A low, slow bake ensures the custard sets with a creamy texture and no curdling. Let it cool slightly before slicing—a warm quiche is soft, golden, and deeply satisfying.



In a large bowl, whisk together cream, eggs, salt, and pepper (if using) until well combined.

Spread desired fillings in bottom of crust. Pour cream mixture all over filling. Carefully return pie pan to foil-lined baking sheet. Tent edges of crust with foil.

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