

The Food Stand Committee would like you to review this information on making pies. Thank you!

Pie Crust Primer

With the Holiday season quickly approaching, many bakers enjoy making homemade pies. The challenge is making the perfect crust. Here are some tips for successful pie baking:

- **Preventing tough crusts** - The two common mistakes include too much liquid and handling the dough too much. Liquid and flour form gluten. When more liquid is used along with excess mixing and kneading, a tough crust is the result. In general, less is more.
- **Crust shrinks** - Once again, gluten is the enemy. Gluten is elastic. Let the dough rest at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator to let the gluten strands relax. Also, don't stretch the dough to fit the pan.
- **Cracks in Pumpkin pie** - This is an egg custard. Egg proteins coagulate, tighten and shrink with heat. If allowed to overcook, the custard will crack when it cools. The solution? Remove pumpkin pie from the oven when the filling still jiggles in the middle. It will continue to bake, set and give a perfect pie.
- **Make it flaky** - This characteristic is a sign of a good crust. Use cold fat in large pieces, at least pea size. If the fat is allowed to warm, it will melt into the flour too much. After mixing, refrigerate the dough to re-solidify the fat. The cold pieces will melt during baking and create a flaky crust.
- **Keep crumbliness minimal** - If flour and fat are mixed together too much, the fat prevents any gluten formation. Some gluten is necessary to hold the crust together. Be sure to keep the fat in large pieces and a too-crumby crust will be minimized.

Baking Pie in Disposable Pans

With county fairs gearing up soon, so are bakers who want to bake a prize-winning pie. But getting the pie to bake properly in a disposable aluminum pan can be a challenge. Aluminum does not hold heat and bakes slowly. Here are some tips to prevent soggy bottom crusts:

- For blind baking, increase baking time up to 10 minutes or until golden brown.
- For double-crust pies, place pie pan on a preheated baking sheet or baking stone.
- For double-crust pies, set the pie inside a glass or stoneware pie pan for more heat transfer.
- **To prevent the crust from burning, cover edges with tin foil around the crust**