

Flaky pastry

Makes: enough for one 9" tart or pie

100g unsalted butter

180g flour + more for rolling the dough

1½ tbsps sugar (omit if making a savoury tart or pie)

a pinch of salt

1 egg

1. Put a glass of water in the freezer or fridge to chill. Cut butter into ½" cubes and chill. Separate the egg and put the yolk in a small bowl in the fridge. (Discard the white, or save it to make meringues.)
2. Measure flour, sugar (if using) and salt into a bowl. Toss butter in flour and then, working quickly and using just fingertips, a pastry cutter or two table knives, rub butter into flour. You should end up with pieces of butter no bigger than peas.
3. Mix 2 tbsps of chilled water with the egg yolk and stir into the mixture. Add 2 to 6 more tbsps chilled water – drizzling it one tablespoon at a time – until the mixture is just sticky enough to come together as a dough if squeezed. Be careful not to add too much water.
4. Dump mixture onto work surface and, using the heel of one hand, smear mix across the counter several times to incorporate butter into the dry bits of flour. You should now be able to bring the dough together into a ball. Do not knead it, just quickly press it together. It doesn't matter if it has a few cracks and irregularities. Wrap in clingfilm and chill for at least half an hour while you prepare your tart or pie filling.
5. Lightly flour the counter and rolling pin and roll dough until uniformly ¼" thick. Start by rolling gently and pinching closed any cracks that appear around edges. Keep moving dough around as you roll to check it's not sticking and so as to roll a circle. Use more flour to dust counter, pin and dough as needed to prevent it sticking. Work quickly so that the butter in the dough does not melt.
6. Use your dough as your recipe instructs...