

PÂTE BRISÉE/ FLAKY TART DOUGH

For two 220-240 mm/9 inch tarts

- 325 g / 2 ½ cups (11.5 ounces) flour
- 15 g / 1 tablespoon sugar
- 4 g / ¾ teaspoon salt
- 227 g / 2 sticks (8 ounces) cold butter, diced (½ small dice/½ medium dice)
(for extra buttery and flaky dough increase butter to 260 g/9 ounces)
- 60-120 ml / 4-8 tablespoons cold water

By hand

1. Mix flour, sugar and salt in a bowl large enough to comfortably accommodate your hands.
2. Sand in the small dice butter with your fingertips to achieve coarse crumbs.
3. Mix in the medium dice butter by flattening it between your fingertips, leaving “flakes” of butter visible in the mixture.
4. Add half of the water and mix gently with a fork until the dough starts to come together. Assess the hydration by picking up and squeezing a portion of dough. If still crumbly, add additional water, a tablespoon at a time as necessary, to bring the dough together. Do not overwork.
5. Turn the dough out onto a piece of plastic wrap and roughly pat into a 6”x10” rectangle. Fold in thirds then pat out again into a rectangle. Turn 90 degrees, fold in thirds again.
6. Divide dough in two, wrap each in plastic wrap and chill for at least one hour before use (or pop one in the freezer for later!).

By food processor

1. Place flour, sugar and salt in bowl of processor.
2. Add all of the diced butter and pulse briefly a few times to achieve coarse crumbs (it’s OK to have some larger pieces of butter still visible).
3. Pour 2 tablespoons ice water through feed tube and pulse briefly, adding additional water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until the dough just comes together.
4. Proceed as in 5 and 6 as noted above.

Pâte brisée can be refrigerated for 2-3 days or frozen, well wrapped, for up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight before use.

Plan ahead and double the recipe, then divide in four and stash wrapped in the freezer. It’s especially nice around the fall and winter holidays when you’re planning on baking lots of tarts

the french tarte

the sweet taste of france

Pâte brisée is the French term for “broken dough” which is made by cutting (or what some call flaking) “broken” pieces of fat into the flour, then bringing the dough together by adding a liquid, usually cold water. The amount of water needed to bring the dough together will vary depending on humidity and ambient temperature, e.g. on a cold winter’s day you will most likely need the larger amount of water than you will on a hot, humid summer day.

Pâte brisée, essentially a basic pie crust, is typically unsweetened (or minimally so) and is perfect for savory tarts like quiche and veggie tarts and for those in which this non-sugary, flakey, buttery dough contrasts so well with naturally sweet fillings, particularly fruits.

I do add a bit of sugar to my pâte brisée, which contributes to the crisp texture and helps with browning without creating sweet-tasting dough. This dough lends itself to filling with fresh fruit tossed in a little lemon juice, sprinkled with a bit of sugar, dotted with a little butter and baked. Blueberries and apples are two of my favorites. Delicious!

Pâte brisée is typically baked at higher temperatures (400-425°F) than most tart dough (325-350°F).

Susan VandenBerg

mobile: 774.280.4803 email: susan@frenchtarte.com web: www.frenchtarte.com