

Receipts, &c.

VARIOUS KINDS OF PASTRY.

We have received several applications for practical and tried directions for making pastry. The following receipts will give our correspondents the information they require:—

In making pastry the cook should be particularly clean and neat. Her utensils should be kept in order, and when they are done with they should be carefully cleaned and put in their places. Her paste-board and rolling-pin, let it be remembered, should, after using, be well scoured with hot water alone. She should not use soap or sand. A marble slab is preferable to a board for rolling paste. Both are generally made too small to be convenient. Three feet long by two feet wide is a good size. In making a paste a good cook will have no waste of any kind, and particularly she will not make more at one time than she wants, under the idea that she can keep it in flour till the next time of making; for it is ten to one but that the old paste will spoil the new. No flour except the very best can be used for fine descriptions of pastry, and in damp weather it should be dried before the fire, but not scorched. Clarified dripping, good lard, marrow, salt butter, well washed, may be used for ordinary pastry; indeed, if they are pure and sweet they will form good pastry, with good flour and good management. In wealthy families, however, where economy is not an object, and everything for the table is required to be of the first quality, the safest plan is to use the best fresh butter. The fat that settles on stews, and on the broth in which meat has been boiled, may be used for pastry, that is, provided it is tasteless. Suet is sometimes used for meat pies, but though it makes a light crust, when hot, it does not eat well when cold.

A great deal more butter, or fat of some kind or other, was formerly directed to be used in making pastry than at present. For ordinary purposes, half the weight of lard or butter is sufficient, but in the richest crusts the quantity should never exceed the weight of flour. Eggs may be added to enrich the crust. Use no more water or other liquid in making paste than is absolutely necessary, or, in other words, take care not to "put out the miller's eye," that is, to make the paste too moist. The great thing is to incorporate the flour well with the fat, which you cannot do if you allow too much water or milk in the first instance.

The under or side crust, which should be thin, should not be made so rich as the top crust, as otherwise it will make the gravy or syrup greasy. All dishes in which pies are to be baked should be buttered or greased round the edges to prevent the crust from sticking, and if there be an under crust, all over the inside, and the same must be done with tins or saucers.

There is a number of other little things to be attended to in making pastry, which we will enumerate in as few words as we can. Fruit pies or large tarts should have a hole made in the middle of the crust.

Flaky and Short Crusts.—In making a flaky crust a part of the fat should be worked with the hand to a cream, and then the whole of the flour well rubbed into it before any water or milk is added. The remaining fat must be stuck on the paste and be rolled out. For crisp crust, by far the most wholesome, the whole of the fat should be rubbed in and thoroughly incorporated with the flour. Water or milk

must be added when this is done, and the dough, or rather paste, made up. The pie-board and rolling-pin should be well dusted with flour, and the dough should be well beaten with the pin to thoroughly mix it, and render it light. Mind, in rolling out paste do not drive the pin backwards and forwards, but always keep rolling from you. In making flaky crusts the paste must be rolled out thin, and the fat or butter laid all over it; then roll it up and beat it till it puffs up in little bladders; it should be then finally rolled out and put in the oven as quickly as possible.

Raised Crust.—Put two pounds and a half of flour on the paste-board, and put on the fire in a saucepan three-quarters of a pint of water and half a pound of good lard; when the water boils make a hole in the middle of the flour, pour in the water and lard by degrees, gently mix it with a spoon, and when it is well mixed, then knead it with your hands till it becomes stiff; dredge a little flour to prevent it sticking to the board, or you cannot make it smooth; then set it aside for an hour, and keep it cool; do not roll it with your rolling-pin, but roll it with your hands, about the thickness of a quart pot; cut it into six pieces, leaving a little for the covers; put the left hand, clenched, in the middle of one of the pieces, and with the other on the outside, work it up against the back of the left to a round or oval shape. It is now ready for the meat, which must be cut into small pieces with some fat, and pressed into the pie; then cover it with the paste previously rolled out to a proper thickness, and of the size of the pie; put this lid on the pie and press it together with your thumb and finger, cut it all around with a pair of scissors, and bake for an hour and a half. Our good old country housewives pride themselves very much upon being able to raise a large and high pork pie. This crust will answer for many meat and other pies baked in dishes or tins.

Puff Paste.—This paste is nearly the same as what we have called flaky crust, and of course made upon the same principles. If eggs are desired, allow three yolks to a pound of butter or lard. Rub a fourth part of the fat to a cream, then mix the eggs with it, and afterwards the flour. A very little water will suffice to wet it. Beat it with the pin to make it flaky; roll it out thin three times, putting in a portion of the fat each time, and roll it from you; after each rolling beat it well.

Sweet Paste.—This is suitable to fruit tarts generally, apples perhaps excepted, for which we recommend a puff paste. To three-quarters of a pound of butter put a pound and a half of flour, three or four ounces of sifted loaf sugar, the yolks of two eggs, and half a pint of new milk. Bake it in a moderate oven.

Crust for Savory Pies.—To two pounds of flour, one and a half of butter or lard, and the yolks of three eggs; rub part of the fat to a cream with the eggs, then rub in the flour; wet with cold water, and roll out with the remainder of the butter. This crust is suitable for pigeon, rabbit, hare, and other savory pies.

Icing Pastry.—When nearly baked enough, take the pastry out of the oven and sift fine powdered sugar over it. Replace it in the oven, and hold over it till the sugar is melted a hot iron shovel. The above method is preferred for pastry to be eaten hot; for cold, beat up the white of two eggs well, wash over the tops of the pies with a brush, and sift over this a good coating of sugar; cause it to adhere to the egg and pie-crust; trundle over it a clean brush dipped in water till the sugar is all moistened. Bake again for about ten minutes.