

JULY

Baking School In-Depth: Ultimate Tomato Pie

With summer tomato season in full swing, there's no better way to celebrate than with this Ultimate Tomato Pie. Chock-full of fresh, vine-ripened tomatoes, melty Monterey Jack cheese, and herby basil, this pie is full of all the best flavors of summer. Add to that a buttery, cheesy piecrust with a crisp, tender bite, and you have a perfectly balanced savory staple. From perfecting pie dough to preparing your filling, this month's Baking School In-Depth module makes pie more approachable than ever!



INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

Great recipes require great ingredients. Here's how each of our recipe's simple ingredients contributes to making the Ultimate Tomato Pie.

VINE-RIPENED TOMATOES: Like most tomatoes, vine-ripened tomatoes are harvested just as they begin to turn red in color. However, unlike most tomatoes, which are harvested, separated from the vine, and ripened, vine-ripened tomatoes keep the attachment to the vine intact all the way from harvest to the grocery store. This process yields a superior tomato, full of flavor and brilliantly ripe.

KOSHER SALT: Kosher salt has a pure, clean flavor because it doesn't contain iodine or minerals. When it comes to salt, one important thing to note is that salt granules come in different sizes and densities, so be sure to weigh your salt for the most accurate measure.

CHEESY ALL-BUTTER PIE DOUGH: Store-bought crusts simply can't compare! "All-butter" means unparalleled flakiness and richness. And to enhance this crust's delicious, buttery bite, we add Monterey Jack cheese for added salty, cheesy flavor. Balanced with the tang of fresh tomatoes and the creaminess of the filling, this pie dough is a savory showstopper.

MONTEREY JACK CHEESE: Sometimes shortened to "Jack," Monterey Jack cheese is a white, semihard cheese made using cow's milk. With a relatively mild, slightly sweet flavor, this cheese adds the perfect melty, cheesy flavor to our delicately flavored pie.

YELLOW ONION: Yellow onion provides plenty of oniony flavor without overpowering the fresh flavor of the tomatoes. A little bit sweet, the onion cooks as the pie bakes, eliminating the need for sautéing them before adding them to the filling. Closely related to garlic, scallions, chives, and leeks, onions are an easy way to add a flavorful punch to savory bakes.

MAYONNAISE: Our creamy filling has mayonnaise to thank for its velvety-rich consistency. Simply put, mayonnaise is an emulsion of oil, egg yolk, and an acid seasoned with salt. The process of making homemade mayonnaise can be tricky, so we opt for store-bought to save time and sanity.

FRESH BASIL: Part of the Lamiaceae family, more commonly known as the mint family, fresh basil balances beautifully between sweet and savory, with notes of black pepper and anise. Whether you prefer sweet basil or Genovese, both work beautifully in this recipe. From caprese salad to margherita pizza to tomato pie, it's clear that basil and tomato are a match made in heaven.

EGG: The egg in this recipe mainly works as a binder. As the proteins in the egg are heated, they firm up and coagulate, providing the necessary structure for clean slices that stay together.

GROUND BLACK PEPPER: Black pepper is the finishing dash of flavor that adds a little extra savory depth to this pie.



PREPARATORY PIE TALK

There are a few different methods out there for making pie dough. Here, we explain our method and why it is right for this recipe.



Our pie dough in this month's module is made using the rubbing/biscuit method, where dry ingredients are whisked together, fat is cut into the dry ingredients, and then liquid is added slowly and mixed just until combined. There are three types of pie dough: long-flake, shortcrust, and mealy. Long-flake uses nickel-size pieces of butter to create a super flaky crust and works well as a top crust. Shortcrust has you break down the butter to hazelnut-size pieces and works well as a base for both pies and tarts. However, both crusts are easily overmixed and can become tough. Mealy pie dough uses small pieces of butter and is best for a bottom crust holding a very moist filling, as it does not absorb moisture from the filling and become soggy. This type of crust is also tender and harder to overmix, making it the perfect base for our tomato pie. To further prevent overmixing, we also hand-mix our dough in this recipe, as the food processor method can be quick and easy but doesn't offer the same slowed control as hand-mixing.



Ultimate
Tomato Pie

ULTIMATE TOMATO PIE

Makes 1 (9-inch) deep-dish pie

Summer sunshine yields some of the sweetest, juiciest tomatoes of the year, and this pie puts those bright slices of tomato front and center. Starting with a tender Cheesy All-Butter Pie Dough, layers of sliced fresh tomatoes and creamy, herby cheese filling are stacked inside to create a savory pie perfect for your next summer gathering.

- 2½ pounds (1,134 grams) vine-ripened tomatoes, sliced crosswise ¼ inch thick
- 2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt, divided
- Cheesy All-Butter Pie Dough** (recipe follows)
- 2 cups (227 grams) finely shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 cup (150 grams) chopped yellow onion
- ¾ cup (168 grams) mayonnaise
- ½ cup (18 grams) thinly sliced fresh basil
- 1 large egg (50 grams), lightly beaten
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- Garnish:** fresh basil leaves

1. Line baking sheets with paper towels. Place tomato slices on prepared pans; sprinkle with 1 teaspoon (3 grams) salt. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes; pat dry. Let stand for 30 minutes; pat dry.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll Cheesy All-Butter Pie Dough into a 13-inch circle (about ⅛ inch thick). Transfer to a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate, pressing into bottom and up sides. Trim edges to ½ inch beyond edge of plate. Roll edges under, and crimp as desired. Freeze for 15 minutes, or refrigerate for 30 minutes.
3. Position oven rack in bottom third of oven. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).
4. In a medium bowl, stir together cheese, onion, mayonnaise, sliced basil, egg, pepper, and remaining 1 teaspoon (3 grams) salt. Spread half of cheese mixture (about 300 grams) in bottom of prepared crust. Layer half of tomato slices in an overlapping pattern on top of

cheese mixture in crust. Top with remaining cheese mixture; top with remaining tomato slices.

5. Bake until golden brown, center is set, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 175°F (80°C), 40 to 45 minutes, covering crust with foil after 25 to 30 minutes of baking to prevent excess browning. Let cool completely. Serve at room temperature. Garnish with basil leaves, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

PRO TIPS

Salting the tomato slices draws out excess moisture before baking to prevent a soggy piecrust and watery filling. This process also results in a more intense tomato flavor and suppresses any bitterness, producing a sweeter tomato flavor.

Alternating the cheese mixture and the tomatoes helps bind everything together while baking, making the pie slice easily and creating beautiful layers.

CHEESY ALL-BUTTER PIE DOUGH

Makes 1 (9-inch) crust

- ⅓ cup (76 grams) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1¼ cups (156 grams) all-purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon (2.25 grams) kosher salt

- ½ cup (57 grams) finely shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- ¼ cup (60 grams) ice water, plus more as needed

1. Freeze butter for 10 to 15 minutes.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour and salt. Add cold butter, tossing to coat. Using your fingers, cut in butter, flattening cubes into big shards and tossing butter through flour mixture to recoat, just until butter pieces are about nickel-size. Add cheese, tossing until evenly distributed. Make a well in center.
3. Add ¼ cup (60 grams) ice water to flour mixture. Working one small section at a time, stir with a fork until mixture begins to become hydrated; start to gently knead dough together. (Don't over-knead, as this will make the dough tough.) Add ice water, about 1 teaspoon (5 grams) at a time, until dough is properly hydrated. (Dough should be uniformly combined and hold together easily, but it won't look totally smooth. Dough that is too dry may have sort of a "dusty" appearance or pockets of unhydrated flour; it will not hold together and will appear crumbly. Dough that is too wet will feel sticky or tacky to the touch and is often smoother and/or lighter in color.)
4. Shape dough into a disk. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 2 days.



PERFECTING PIECRUST

In three simple steps, you'll have a wonderfully tender, flaky piecrust that'll pair perfectly with this pie's cheesy tomato filling



- 1. Freeze butter for 10 to 15 minutes.** When it comes to pie dough, keeping the butter as cold as possible is the key to achieving flaky piecrust. As the crust bakes, the little bits of butter will steam, creating pockets of air that puff up to create flaky layers. If the butter's too warm, it'll incorporate into the flour too much, making the dough sticky and hard to work with, and the final crust will be tough and chewy instead of tender and flaky.
- 2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour and salt. Add cold butter, tossing to coat. Using your fingers, cut in butter, flattening cubes into big shards and tossing butter through flour mixture to recoat, just until butter pieces are about nickel-size.** (You want to make sure the butter is well distributed before adding the liquid to prevent the butter from clumping together.) **Add cheese, tossing until evenly distributed. Make a well in center. Add ¼ cup (60 grams) ice water to flour mixture. Working one small section at a time, stir with a fork until mixture begins to become hydrated; start to gently knead dough together. (Don't over-knead, as this will make the dough tough.) Add ice water, about 1 teaspoon (5 grams) at a time, until dough is properly hydrated. (Dough should be uniformly combined and hold together easily, but it won't look totally smooth. Dough that is too dry may have sort of a "dusty" appearance or pockets of unhydrated flour; it will not hold together and will appear crumbly. Dough that is too wet will feel sticky or tacky to the touch and is often smoother and/or lighter in color.)**
- 3. Shape dough into a disk. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 2 days.** Chilling pie dough allows the dough to rest and the gluten to relax. The flour and butter also firm up, which makes the dough easier to handle and roll out when it comes time to assemble your pie. This dough also freezes well; just let it thaw in the refrigerator overnight before using.

ASSEMBLING YOUR PIE

From prepping your tomatoes to crimping your piecrust, we show you every step in perfecting this delicious savory pie



1. Line baking sheets with paper towels. Place tomato slices on prepared pans; sprinkle with 1 teaspoon (3 grams) salt. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes; pat dry. Let stand for 30 minutes; pat dry.

ASSEMBLING YOUR PIE



2. On a lightly floured surface, roll Cheesy All-Butter Pie Dough into a 13-inch circle (about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick). Transfer to a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate, pressing into bottom and up sides. Trim edges to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch beyond edge of plate. Roll edges under, and crimp as desired. Freeze for 5 minutes, or refrigerate for 30 minutes.
3. Position oven rack in bottom third of oven. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).

ASSEMBLING YOUR PIE



4. In a medium bowl, stir together cheese, onion, mayonnaise, sliced basil, egg, pepper, and remaining 1 teaspoon (3 grams) salt. Spread half of cheese mixture (about 300 grams) in bottom of prepared crust. Layer half of tomato slices in an overlapping pattern on top of cheese mixture in crust. Top with remaining cheese mixture; top with remaining tomato slices.

5. Bake until golden brown, center is set, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 175°F (80°C), 40 to 45 minutes, covering crust with foil after 25 to 30 minutes of baking to prevent excess browning. Let cool completely. Serve at room temperature. Garnish with basil leaves, if desired. Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.