

Fresh Strawberry Pie with Hibiscus

This fruit pie is all about fresh, ripe strawberries. Here they are paired with floral and tart hibiscus and topped with Chantilly cream. The acidity of the hibiscus complements the berries' sweetness, and this is now a new summer classic for me.

Makes one 9-inch (23 cm) pie

Serves 8

Prep Time: 20 minutes, plus chilling

Cook Time: Under 10 minutes

Filling:

6 cups (1 kg) fresh strawberries, divided

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (150 g) granulated sugar

3 Tbsp (24 g) cornstarch

1 cup (250 mL) brewed [hibiscus tea](#), cooled to room temperature

$\frac{1}{2}$ recipe Classic Pie Dough (see below), rolled to 9 inches (23 cm), then fully blind-baked (see tips below) and cooled

1 cup (250 mL) whipping cream

1 Tbsp (8 g) instant skim milk powder (optional)

$1\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp (12 g) icing sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp [Neilsen-Massey vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste](#)

- 1. Prepare the strawberries.** Hull the strawberries, then purée 1 cup (165 g) to make $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 mL) strawberry purée. Set aside the rest.
- 2. Make the sauce.** Whisk the sugar and cornstarch together in a small saucepan. Whisk in the strawberry purée followed by the hibiscus tea. Set the saucepan over medium-high heat and bring the sauce to a simmer, whisking constantly until it thickens and begins to bubble, about 4 minutes. Transfer the sauce to a bowl to cool, then chill for at least 1 hour before assembling.

Be sure the tea is at room temperature before whisking it into the strawberry mixture. Hot liquids added to a starch will immediately lump up, but cool or cold ones won't.
- 3. Finish the filling.** Slice the remaining strawberries into a large bowl and toss with the chilled sauce. Spoon this filling into the prepared pie shell.
- 4. Whip the cream** and skim milk powder, if using, by hand or with beaters on high speed until it holds a soft peak.

Use the skim milk powder if you are whipping the cream ahead of time. It stabilizes the whipped cream so that it holds its shape for hours (whereas regular whipped cream will start to deflate within a few hours).

5. **Whip in the icing sugar and vanilla** and chill until ready to use.

6. **Decorate.** Dollop and spread the Chantilly cream over the filling or pipe the cream onto the pie as you wish. Chill until ready to serve.

This pie is best enjoyed the day it is made, but it will keep in the fridge for a day.

Classic Pie Dough

An all-butter pie dough delivers a rich taste and a tender flakiness to any pie, savoury or sweet. This is my staple pie dough that I have been using for at least 10 years, ever since I discovered that adding a little oil before the butter protects the flour and that the butter does not have to be ice cold, contrary to popular belief.

Makes enough for one 9-inch (23 cm) double-crust pie

Prep Time: 10 minutes, plus chilling

2½ cups (375 g) all-purpose flour

1 Tbsp (12 g) granulated sugar

1 tsp fine sea salt

3 Tbsp (45 mL) vegetable oil

1 cup (225 g) cool unsalted butter, cut into pieces (does not have to be ice cold)

¼ cup (60 mL) cool water

2 tsp white vinegar or fresh lemon juice

1. **Combine the dry ingredients** by stirring the flour, sugar and salt in a large bowl. Add the oil. Using a pastry cutter, electric beaters or a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, blend until the flour looks evenly crumbly.

Adding a little vegetable oil to the flour before adding the butter is another secret for tender and flaky pie dough. The oil coats the flour so that it won't overhydrate when the water is added. Too much water develops the protein in the flour, which is why a crust becomes tough or shrinks when it bakes.

2. **Add the butter** and cut in until the dough is rough and crumbly but small pieces of butter are still visible.

I have found that working with cool—but not ice-cold—butter is easiest. Pull your butter from the fridge about 30 minutes before making your dough and it will cut into the flour quickly and more evenly.

3. Add the liquids. Place the water and vinegar (or lemon juice) in a small bowl, stir together and then add all at once to the flour mixture, mixing just until the dough comes together. Shape it into two discs, wrap well and chill until firm, at least 1 hour. Turn to p. XX for how to roll pastry doughs.

While butter is ideal, if you prefer to use vegetable shortening, omit the oil and increase the added water to 7 Tbsp (105 mL). This balances the fat-to-water ratio, since butter is 80% fat and shortening is 100% fat.

If you are not making a pie immediately, refrigerate the dough, well wrapped, for up to 2 days, or freeze it for up to 3 months. Thaw it overnight in the fridge before rolling.

How to Blind-bake Pie Pastry

In some cases, you'll need to prebake your pie pastry in part or in full before filling it and completing your recipe. Knowing when, why and how to do this will result in pies that are perfectly cooked every time.

Blind-baking involves faking a filling. If you were to place an unfilled pie shell into the oven, the sides would slip down the pie plate and the bottom pastry would bubble up, leaving no space for the filling and losing all of its shape. By weighing down the pie pastry with foil and weights, the pastry stays in place.

1. Roll out the pie dough on a lightly floured surface into a circle just under $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) thick. Trim away any large pieces of dough from the edge and tuck and pinch the edges in a pattern. Alternatively, trim the pastry to the outside edge of the pie plate and press in place. Cut out shapes from the excess pastry, moisten with water and press gently along the top edge of the pastry. Dock the bottom of the pie shell with a fork. Chill the pastry shell for at least 30 minutes (up to a day).

When trimming the outside edge of your pie shell, take the time to press the pastry onto the top lip of the pie plate to keep it in place.

2. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).

3. Weight the pie shell. Place two sheets of aluminum foil over the pie shell, gently covering the outside trim. Use pie weights, dried rice or dried beans (about 2 cups/500 mL) and pour these on top of the foil, spreading them out to the edges.

4. **Bake the pie for 20 minutes.** Carefully remove the foil together with the pie weights (this is why you double up on the foil). Return the pan to the oven for 18 to 20 minutes, until the edges of the pastry are golden brown and the bottom of the pastry is lightly browned.
5. **Brush the pie shell,** hot from the oven, with lightly whisked egg white.
6. **Cool the pie shell** in its pan on a rack before filling.