

pieminister



• A PIE *for* ALL SEASONS •

Tristan Hogg and Jon Simon

Contents

Cover

Title Page

Introduction

A Brief History of Pieminister

Pastry

Crust Lust & Other Notes

Using up Pastry Trimmings

spring

summer

autumn

winter

Accompaniments

A Winning Recipe

A Baker's Dozen

Dedication

Acknowledgements

List of Recipes

Index

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Introduction

We love pies, we've always loved pies! Over the years we've cooked and eaten thousands of them. Not surprisingly we have learnt a lot about pies. We have been called leaders of the pie revolution, pie-oneers, the upper crust of pie-makers and numerous other dreadful puns. People have handed us recipes in the street, sent us poems about pies and presented us with pies to try. We have talked about very little else for the past eight years.

We now think it's our duty to share all our knowledge with you. We have pulled in lots of favours and flavours from friends, family, suppliers and the pieminister team to bring you a book filled with great recipes. We went shooting in Devon, cheese-making in Somerset, foraging and surfing in Cornwall, fishing in Dorset and partying in Bristol - all in the name of pie!

This was not just for our own selfish gratification, but for the good of all. Our aim has been to elevate pies to where they truly belong: the food of the gods!

There is a (sad) misconception that pies are simply a winter dish, comfort food for cold and stormy nights. In our book we have set out to prove this theory wrong. We have made pies that are filled with seasonal ingredients, great for summer parties, eating on the beach, spring suppers and autumn lunches. Small ones, big ones, breakfast ones, fruit ones, family ones and ones that make you go oooooh! We've included baking and pastry tips (you'll find these at the

beginning of the book) and accompaniments to go with pies (at the end of the book). To see you through the seasons, there are also features on everything from tips on how to survive a festival to Christmas party games.

Put simply, a pie is a good filling with some kind of casing – a bottom or a top, or both. And the covering doesn't have to be pastry, of course. It can be mash, crumble, grated cheese, a breadcrumb mix . . . There are no real rules when making pies. We've included rolls, strudels, tarts, crumbles and turnovers.

Have fun, try our stuff, try your own stuff and try your friends' stuff, and enjoy the fact that you are keeping the ancient tradition of pie-making alive. We hope you enjoy using this book as much as we have enjoyed making it.

Jon and Tristan



pieminister cabinet: Jon (left) and Tristan (right)

A Brief History of Pieminister

We met as teenagers in the early 1990s. After a first meeting at Tristan's home (Jon was dating Tristan's sister at the time) we went on to become great friends. Jon owned a bar in London and Tristan came to work there as a chef at the tender age of 18. We had fun and, between us, we made the bar a thriving success - mostly down to the groundbreaking menu. We decided that we should set up in business together some day.

Pies were on the agenda. Jon had travelled to Australia a few years before and stumbled across [Harry's Café de Wheels](#) in Woolloomooloo, Sydney, a mecca for all food lovers, celebrities, cool kids and anyone who knows anything about pies. After devouring their famous 'tiger pie' (beef pie with mash, mushy peas and gravy), he realized pretty quickly that this would be a great concept in the UK.

A few years later Tristan was headhunted to work as a chef with touring bands. He became 'a chef to the stars', cooking for giants such as the Rolling Stones, Pet Shop Boys and Robbie Williams. After his stint working for these legends, Tristan moved to Australia to sunbathe, surf and learn from the Antipodeans the art of cooking and, more importantly, research pies in greater depth. It was there, on Bondi Beach, while eating a Thai chicken pie, that the pieminister name was born.

Tristan returned from Australia full of excitement. Armed with the name for our new venture, we started pieminister.

We set about perfecting the first range of pies from the basement of Tristan's family home in the heart of Bristol. We tested more than 200 recipes before coming up with what we thought was the best line-up since the 1966 World Cup. Our aim was simple - to make the best pies we possibly could. They had to contain only fresh, responsibly sourced, free-range and natural ingredients gathered from as close to our kitchen as possible.

We started sourcing our beef and pork from local farms. We found a great free-range chicken supplier, used local dairies for our milk and free-range eggs and discovered a beautiful mill close by that made award-winning flour. We did our best to work with the seasons so that vegetables, fruit, nuts and herbs gave our range a fantastic variety of flavours throughout the year. Later, when we started doing fish pies, we made sure to use only sustainable fish.

Soon after the first pieminister pie was created in June 2003, we set up a pie shop in Bristol - with a kitchen and a junior minister. Tristan rolled, baked and cooked while Jon tended the shop and wholesale business.

In 2004, not long after the launch of the Bristol shop, we were given the opportunity to trade at the Glastonbury festival and invited to be the only pie stall at the highly acclaimed Borough Market in London. This was just the break we needed. Today, our pies are sold at some of the best music festivals, delis, food halls, farmers' markets and pubs as well as in pieminister cafés scattered around the country.

Now we've written a book telling you all our secrets . . .
don't tell anyone!



Pastry

All our pastry recipes make around 650-850g, which ensures in most cases that you will have enough to cover your pie generously, with some to spare. If you have some left over after making your pie, fear not - it will keep in the fridge, well wrapped, for a good three days, or can be frozen for future use.

Alternatively, you could make nice goodies such as jam tarts or [cheese straws](#).

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Pastry will behave better if it doesn't detect worry in your hands. Pretend to be the boss even if you're scared of your suet crust. And have fun .

..

Shortcrust Pastry

This sturdy pastry is straightforward to make and simple to use. The proportions are half fat to flour, with enough water added to bind the pastry together. If you want to turn this into a sweet pastry (that isn't too sweet), add 4 tbsp of caster sugar.

Makes about 660g

400g plain flour

a pinch of salt

200g butter, cut into small cubes

about 4 tbsp cold water

Sift the flour into a bowl and add the salt. Add the cubes of butter and rub them into the flour with your fingertips until the mixture looks like breadcrumbs. Gradually stir in

enough cold water to make a pliable but fairly firm dough. Knead lightly for 30 seconds or so until smooth, then wrap in clingfilm and chill for at least 30 minutes before use.

Rough Puff Pastry

Compared to its more temperamental sibling, puff pastry, rough puff is pretty straightforward to make. It's a great choice for rich, sumptuous pies. It's very important here that the butter is cold and you don't rub it in, as you really want little pockets of butter . . . remember, butter pockets, not butter fingers!

It's not really practical to make rough puff in a smaller quantity than the one given here, so for some recipes you may have quite a lot left over. Either wrap it well and freeze for another time, or use it in one of the [ways suggested](#).

Makes about 650g

250g plain flour

a pinch of salt

250g cold butter, cut into 1cm cubes

150ml very cold water

1 tsp lemon juice

Put the flour and salt into a bowl and add the cubes of butter. Mix the water with the lemon juice, then add about three-quarters of it to the flour mixture. Stir briefly until everything comes together into a rough, shaggy dough, adding the remaining water if necessary. Place the dough on a floured board, press it into a square, then roll it out into a long rectangle about 8mm thick. Don't turn the pastry while you are rolling, but be sure to lift it up and flour underneath if it begins to stick.

Fold up the bottom third of the pastry, then fold down the top third, like folding a letter. Give it a quarter turn and roll it out again – it's best to work quickly and lightly so the butter doesn't warm up too much. Fold in three again, wrap in clingfilm and chill for 20 minutes. Repeat the rolling and folding twice, then wrap again and chill thoroughly before using.

Suet Pastry

This is the quickest pastry of all to make, and extremely simple – the only thing to watch out for is to avoid adding too much water. Although it's associated with steamed puddings, suet pastry also works really well in baked pies. It has to be made by hand or in a mixer with a dough hook. If you tried to do it in a food processor, the suet would be chopped up finely, which would render it unsuety. The whole point of this pastry is the little melty gems of suet, which give it its unique texture and slight flakiness.

Suet is a great pastry to use if you want to include flavourings, such as rosemary, chopped anchovy, cracked black pepper or grated cheese. Because it's rolled slightly thicker than most pastries, the additions won't tear it.

You can use packet suet, either meat or vegetarian, or buy proper old-fashioned beef suet from a butcher. This will have to be put in the freezer before use and then grated into a little flour so the pieces stay separate. It might seem like a lot of trouble but the flavour is fantastic. Beef suet comes from around the kidneys of the animal and is more sustainable than most vegetable suet, which is made from palm oil, with all the environmental implications that has.

Makes about 750g

400g plain flour
a pinch of salt

200g suet
about 120-150ml milk

Put the flour and salt into a bowl and stir in the suet. Gradually stir in enough milk to make a fairly stiff dough - be sure to add it very slowly or you might find the mixture has suddenly become saturated. If this does happen, mix in a little extra flour. Turn the pastry out on to a lightly floured board and knead for a couple of minutes, until smooth - you can treat this pastry more firmly than ones made with butter. Wrap in clingfilm and chill for about 30 minutes before use.

Soured Cream Pastry

This pastry is wonderful to work with. The cream makes it smooth, tender and melt-in-the-mouth, and provides sheen when cooked. It also makes a great base for spices, herbs or citrus zest if you want a flavoured pastry.

Makes about 850g

500g plain flour
a pinch of salt
250g butter, cut into small cubes
90-100ml soured cream

Sift the flour into a bowl and add the salt and butter. Rub the butter into the flour with your fingertips until the mixture looks like breadcrumbs, then stir in enough soured cream to bring it together into a dough. Wrap in clingfilm and chill for about 30 minutes before use.

Hot Water Crust Pastry

This pastry is used for making 'cold-eating' raised pies, such as pork pies. It does what it says on the tin: you add hot water to the mix to make a really fun-to-work-with, malleable dough, which you pull up around the filling by

hand. A word of warning: do not place this pastry in the fridge or allow it to cool; use it right away or it will be a nightmare trying to get it to work.

Makes about 850g

450g plain flour

2 tsp caster sugar

1 free-range egg, lightly beaten

200ml water

60g butter, cut into cubes

100g lard, cut into cubes

Mix the flour and sugar together in a bowl. Make a well in the centre, pour in the egg and cover with a little of the flour. Put the water, butter and lard in a saucepan and heat gently until the fat has melted and the water is just at boiling point. Slowly pour this mixture into the flour, stirring with a table knife until it forms a dough. Knead the pastry lightly until smooth (perhaps with some rubber gloves on if it's very hot), then use straight away, while it's soft and pliable.



Sweet Pastry

This pastry is based on the dough for [sablé biscuits](#), a kind of shortbread. *Sablé* is the French word for sandy, which refers to their soft, crumbly texture. If you have any leftover pastry, either freeze it or, better still, make it into little biscuits.

As this pastry is so rich, it can be a little tricky to handle, so do make sure you chill it thoroughly before rolling. If it tears when you are lining the tin, don't fret; just patch it with a bit of pastry. Despite everything, this pastry really is worth the work.

If it all sounds too scary, then use the [shortcrust](#) with added sugar. Sissy!

Makes about 700g

250g softened unsalted butter
125g icing sugar, sifted
1 tbsp whipping cream
1 free-range egg yolk
350g plain flour, sifted

Using an electric mixer if you have one, cream the butter until light and fluffy. Beat in the icing sugar, then mix in the cream and egg yolk. Finally, mix in the flour on a low speed until just combined. Turn out on to a floured surface and knead lightly for a few seconds until smooth. Shape into a disc, wrap in clingfilm and chill for at least 4 hours.

Puff Pastry

Making puff pastry is quite tricky, so we recommend that you buy it. The shop-bought stuff is pretty good these days, especially the ones made with butter, and you can also get very good organic ones. Where we have specified the use of puff (as opposed to rough puff) in a recipe, do use it, as we are looking for 'lift', which you just won't get otherwise.

Filo Pastry

Tricky to make, so we would expect you to buy this - unless you really have lots of time, in which case refer to a good Greek cookbook or, if you're Greek, ask your grandmother.

Crust Lust & Other Notes

Crust lust is the feeling you get when you take a wonderful pie out of the oven that has been prepared using your own pastry. Making your own is so satisfying, quick to do and hugely delicious. It's important to get your pastry-making right, as it's half your pie, but it's by no means magic. Just follow the recipes we have given, use a little patience and intuition - with practice, you will get to know when the pastry feels right - and an amazing crust will unleash itself upon your serving table. Having said that, don't be deterred from making a pie if you really don't have the time or inclination to knock up your own pastry. Some of the ones you can buy are really quite good and we certainly wouldn't disown you if you made use of them occasionally.

So, a few tips to get you started.

Hands

People talk about everything needing to be very cold for pastry-making, including your hands, and it does help, as it means the fat is less likely to become greasy. So do what you can to keep the temperature down - if you have warm hands, a good tip is to hold them under cold running water for a few seconds, then pat dry. Don't get too hung up on this, however, as there are more important quality-defining factors than the temperature of your hands. Some recipes recommend using chilled butter but, given the choice, we would work with slightly softer butter over freezing butter any day. You can start the shortcrust and soured cream pastries off in a food processor, which helps prevent them

getting too warm: just whiz the flour and fat together, then tip into a bowl and stir in the liquid.

Use Yummy Fats

None of the recipes in this book uses margarine. Instead they all rely on the good old-fashioned stuff, like butter, lard and suet. The pastry will taste 10 times better for using natural fats such as these. If you use vegetable rather than beef suet, you might like to look for one containing non-hydrogenated fat.

Liquid

The quantity of liquid given in the pastry recipes can only be a rough guide, as there are so many factors that will determine how much liquid you need – the type of flour you use and the temperature, for example. The best thing to do is to mix about two-thirds of the liquid into the dry ingredients and then add the rest a little at a time until you have a nice, pliable but non-sticky consistency . . . it's hard to explain, but you'll know when you've got it right as your pastry will be easy to work with.

More Liquid . . .

Besides water, we sometimes use milk, soured cream or egg yolks. All of these fatty liquids add to the richness of the pastry, making it more tender and velvety.

Egg Wash

We always use free-range eggs for glazing a pie, as it gives a great sheen. Some people even double-glaze a pie for a super-glossy top – once before cooking and again just as it comes out of the oven piping hot. Cream also works well as a glaze.

Relax!

Give your pastry a break. If you'd been manhandled and kneaded for 15 minutes or so, you would require a break and so does pastry. Leave it to rest, wrapped in clingfilm in the fridge, for at least 30 minutes before using. We always pat our pastry into the shape we want to roll it out in before chilling it, so that it rolls neatly when taken out of the fridge. If it's too firm to roll, leave it at room temperature for about 30 minutes first.

Rolling Your Pastry (After It Has Relaxed)

Get yourself a decent rolling pin, if you are not already the proud owner of one. Lightly flour a work surface and the rolling pin itself. With your hands at either end of the rolling pin, roll out the pastry gently and with even weight across it so that it flattens evenly. Lift it up every few rolls, flouring very lightly underneath if necessary, and give it a quarter turn. As the pastry gets larger, you will have to lift it up on the rolling pin rather than in your hands, so it doesn't break. Be calm and gentle while rolling, to help ensure you don't overstretch the pastry, which could make it tough.

Lining a Pie Dish

Lift up the rolled-out pastry on the rolling pin, wrapping it round loosely if necessary, then hold it over the centre of the pie dish and unroll it into the dish. Lightly press it into the corners with your fingertips, making sure you don't stretch the pastry. Trim off the excess with a sharp knife or, if you are using a dish without a rim, such as a flan tin, just run the rolling pin lightly over the top to cut off the excess. Chill briefly before filling or baking blind; this helps prevent shrinkage in the oven.

If you are lining a deep pie tin or a pudding basin, cut a small triangle out of one side of the pastry after rolling, so

you don't get lots of folds when you put it in the dish.

Making a Pastry Lid

Press the trimmings together if necessary and roll them out again as above. Lightly brush the edges of the pastry lining the dish with beaten egg (or brush the rim of the dish with egg if you are making a single-crust pie), then pick up the sheet of pastry on the rolling pin and unroll it over the pie. Trim off the excess with a knife and press the pastry edges together to seal - or just press the pastry on to the egg-washed rim of the dish for a single-crust pie. You need to make a hole in the centre of the pie to let the steam out, but a ripped hole is better than a neatly cut hole, which tends to close up in the oven.

Blackbirds and Other Funnels

These support the top crust, thus helping prevent it becoming soggy, and also help to avoid 'boil out' - which, as the name suggests, is when the filling boils out across the top of your pie.

Crimping

This ensures the pastry edges stay firmly sealed during baking. Crimping is also your trademark finish. Some people like to be neat, others take a messier, more rustic approach, so have a play around and see what works for you. It can be as simple as pinching the pastry with your thumb and forefinger all around the edge of the pie, or you can do a more involved design. Be firm but fair when crimping - for a crimp to hold throughout baking, it needs to be shown who's boss beforehand. Make your crimps deeper than you think they need to be without squeezing the filling out. When using two different pastries for the base and lid, leave the pie to stand for about 10 minutes

after crimping to allow the pastry top to make friends and bind with the base.

Decorating

This is a fun way of using up little scraps of leftover pastry and giving your pie personality. But don't go overboard: too much and you will end up with an uncooked lid due to the double thickness of the pastry. Glaze the pastry lid all over with beaten egg before applying the decorations, then glaze the decorations. We use sprinkles a lot at pieminister, too. Black pepper, herbs, nuts, or whatever you like all look great sprinkled over a pie crust before baking.

Cool Mix

Unless you are in a real rush and are working very fast, we recommend letting cooked fillings cool before using them. If it's convenient, you could make the filling the day before and keep it in the fridge overnight. Adding the filling to the pie cold will help prevent the onset of '[soggy bottom](#)' and '[boil out](#)' (see [blackbirds and other funnels](#)).

Baking Blind

Mostly an exercise reserved for tarts and quiches – and quiche is not for this book. However, on the odd occasion here we have opted to bake blind a tart with a fairly liquid filling, or a filling that needs baking at a different temperature from the pastry, or that doesn't need baking at all. You will need some baking parchment or greaseproof paper and ceramic baking beans (available from kitchen shops) or uncooked rice, beans or lentils – these prevent the pastry base rising up and also stop the sides melting down the edge of the tin when the pastry is heating up. Line the uncooked pastry case with the paper, making sure it comes up above the side of the tin, then fill with the beans or rice and bake as instructed in the recipe.

Soggy Bottom

You get this with bottom-crust pies for a number of reasons: if you don't [bake blind](#) when required; if the filling is too liquid or is added while it's hot; if your oven is not hot enough; or if you bake a pie in anything but a metal dish. Putting the pie dish on a hot baking sheet in the oven will help give a crisp pastry base. Always use cooked rather than raw fruit for pies with a bottom crust, otherwise the juices will make the pastry soggy. In some recipes we have used just a pastry lid. This saves time and still tastes mighty good, although a purist might be inclined to tell you off.

'Bake Off'

If the pie starts to colour too much on top before the filling is thoroughly heated through, then just cover it with foil and move it to the bottom of the oven. The same goes for baking blind if the pastry sides are cooking much faster than the base.

Dishes

The right dish is mighty important when making pies. For bottom-crust pies, always go for something metal, to make sure the base cooks properly. You can buy round or rectangular metal pie plates and dishes in various sizes, or you could use a greased deep baking tray or enamel dish. Enamel is a pieminister favourite: it's cheap, comes in lots of different sizes and looks good as well.

You can also use a metal-handled frying pan (i.e. one that can safely go in the oven) or a Le Creuset casserole dish. Earthenware dishes are fine for pies that only have a top crust. Sometimes we don't use a dish at all: we make a pie that just sits on a baking tray. For tarts, a loose-bottomed

tin is the one to go for. If you're making a steamed pud, then a good old-fashioned pudding basin is best.

Then you have the filling to think about. In general, it's best not to spread it too thin. Don't overfill your pies either - leave about a centimetre of headspace, so you can seal the pastry lid to the edges.

If you want to know how much filling your dish holds, you can measure its volume by pouring water into it from a measuring jug. Here are the approximate volumes for standard dishes:

- Individual pie dish = approximately 350ml
- 4-person dish = approximately 1.5 litres
- 6-person dish = approximately 2 litres
- 8-person dish = approximately 2.8 litres

In most of the recipes, we haven't specified an exact size for the dish - this is to allow you to use whatever you have to hand. If you find you have some filling left over, then never mind, just make another small pie, or freeze it, or eat it as a casserole in the case of a cooked meat filling.

Storage and Shelf Life

Pies keep in the fridge for a good few days and most of them freeze very well too; just defrost thoroughly before reheating.

Using up Pastry Trimmings

Cheese Straws

Puff and rough puff are good for these but you can also use shortcrust or soured cream pastry. Press the pastry trimmings together, roll them out to about 3mm thick, then cut into 5cm-wide strips. Brush with beaten egg and scatter generously with grated Cheddar or crumbled Stilton cheese. If you like, you can twist them by picking them up and gently turning the ends to give a spiral. Place on a greased baking sheet and bake at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 10–15 minutes, until golden.

Sablé Biscuits

Press together sweet pastry trimmings, roll them out to about 4mm thick and then cut out shapes with a pastry cutter. Place on a greased baking sheet, brush with beaten egg and bake at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 8–10 minutes, until pale golden. Then sit down with a nice cup of tea and the paper and munch away.

Jam Tarts

Use shortcrust, sweet pastry, rough puff or puff for these. Roll out the pastry to about 3mm thick, cut out rounds with a pastry cutter and use to line a bun tray. Put a little jam (or lemon curd or even marmalade) in each one and bake at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 6–8 minutes, until the pastry edges are golden. Be careful not to overfill them or they will bubble over in the oven and you will have a horrible, molten mess. A good tip is to put just a small teaspoonful of jam in each tart, then top them up after baking.

Turnovers

You can use any pastry to make a turnover and they are good with both savoury and sweet fillings: try leftover pie filling; grated cheese and cooked onions (or other vegetables); lightly cooked fruit such as apples, gooseberries or rhubarb; a handful of fresh berries, or even jam.

Roll out the leftover pastry to about 3mm thick and cut out circles 12-15cm in diameter. Place the filling to one side of each pastry circle, brush the pastry edges with beaten egg, then fold over to cover the filling. Seal well - turnovers are where you can get really creative with your crimping - brush all over with beaten egg, then place on a baking sheet and bake at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for about 20 minutes, until the pastry is golden brown and the filling is piping hot.

Bye-Laws & Pie-Laws

- All the meaty, casserole-type fillings in this book can be cooked in the oven at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 if that's more convenient, rather than simmered on the stove. This has the advantage that you don't have to keep checking the filling to make sure it's not sticking or drying out.
- Don't feel you have to keep exactly to the recipe when shaping pies. Use whatever dish you have available, and be creative when it comes to decorating the pastry.
- We like to mix the pastries in a pie – for example, a shortcrust base and a suet top. But if you prefer, you can stick to one kind.
- A really good pie has a filling that can be eaten on its own. Many of our savoury pies use a well-flavoured casserole as a filling.
- Most pie fillings can be made well in advance and kept in the fridge, then covered with pastry and baked when you need them. Because the filling will be chilled, you may need to add another 10 minutes to the cooking time to make sure it's thoroughly heated through.



spring

