

Frozen Pie Shell Instructions

Excerpted from the Hoosier Mama Book of Pie

BLIND BAKING

Blind baking is a funny-sounding term that simply means baking a pie shell prior to filling it. Though it has been a part of kitchen-speak for centuries, no one has any idea where the term came from. Lately, “pre-baking” has taken its place in contemporary recipes, and while it is certainly more descriptive, at Hoosier Mama we prefer the traditional term. Use “blind baking” confidently in a sentence and you get automatic membership in the secret society of pie makers!

Blind baking is used for pies like Chocolate Cream (p.141), where the filling is not cooked in the pie shell and for quiches and some custards, where the shell needs to bake longer than the filling. We also blind bake shells for pies like Pumpkin (p. 149) or Hoosier Sugar Cream (p. 171), where the pie filling bakes for up to an hour in the pie shell. We find it keeps the bottom crust from getting soggy.

In blind baking, pie shells are lined with parchment paper and filled with weights to keep air pockets from forming as the shells bake. You can buy ceramic weights or stainless steel “pie chains” at specialty cooking stores, but dried pinto beans are inexpensive and work just as well. At the shop, we line the shells with 13x5-inch coffee filters instead of parchment paper, and they fit the 9-inch crimps perfectly and let air flow through to the bottom crust. Don’t use foil or wax paper; foil blocks airflow, resulting in a tough, dense bottom crust, and the coating on wax paper will burn and smoke in a hot oven.

- 1. Preheat the oven to 400 deg F.**
- 2. Place a frozen, crimped pie shell on a baking sheet. Line the inside of the shell with parchment paper or a coffee filter. Fill with uncooked beans until the beans are even with the top edge of the crimp. Press down on the beans to make sure they spread to the edges of the shell.**
- 3. Bake for 20 minutes, rotating 180 degrees halfway through. The outer edge of the crimp should be dry and golden brown.**
- 4. Remove the shell from the oven and carefully remove the parchment paper/coffee filter full of beans. If the paper sticks to the pie, bake it for 3 more minutes and try again. Once the parchment paper or coffee filter is removed, prick the bottom of the shell all over with a fork. Bake for 3 more minutes, until the interior of the shell is dry and light golden brown.**