

pate sucree

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Pâte Sucrée

The sweet tart shell: a short, sturdy, cookie-like pastry that holds a vertical wall, cuts cleanly, and does not shrink. It is not a pie crust — there is no flakiness, and none is wanted. Where [all-butter pie crust](#) is a rubbed dough that relies on fat in sheets, this is a creamed dough that behaves like a [cookie](#) and is handled like one.

Its close relatives: *pâte sablée* has more butter and less egg and is sandier; *pâte brisée* has no sugar and is the French equivalent of a plain shortcrust.

What makes it work

- **Creamed, not rubbed.** Butter and sugar are beaten together first, then egg, then flour. That coats the flour in fat evenly, which is what stops [gluten](#) forming and stops the shell shrinking.
- **Egg yolk is the liquid.** Very little free water, so very little gluten. This is why a sucrée shell holds a 3 cm wall while a pie crust slumps.
- **Roll between parchment.** The dough is soft and tears; parchment means no extra flour and no stretching.
- **Freeze the lined tin for 20 minutes** before baking. Frozen pastry into a hot oven sets before the butter melts.
- **Patch cracks with raw dough**, after blind baking, and give it two more minutes. Every professional does this.

Ingredients

One 23 cm tart shell, or six 10 cm tartlets.

- 250 g all-purpose flour
- 100 g powdered sugar
- 140 g unsalted butter, softened
- 1 [egg](#) plus 1 yolk
- 3 g fine salt
- 1 tsp vanilla — see [Pure vanilla extract](#)
- optional: 30 g ground [almonds](#), replacing 30 g of the flour

Method

Beat the butter and powdered sugar until smooth, one minute — pale, but not aerated. Beat in the egg, yolk and vanilla.

Add the flour, salt and any almond in one go and mix only until it comes together. Flatten into a disc, wrap, and chill one hour.

Roll between two sheets of parchment to 3 mm and lift into a loose-bottomed tart tin. Press into the corner with a small ball of offcut dough — do not use your fingertip, it thins the wall. Leave the overhang and trim it after baking, by rolling the pin across the rim.

Freeze 20 minutes.

Line with parchment, fill with weights to the top, and bake **175 °C / 350 °F for 20 minutes**. Remove the weights and bake **10–12 minutes** more until an even biscuit colour.

For a wet filling, brush the hot shell with beaten egg white and return for two minutes.

Notes

- **Do not trim before baking.** A trimmed edge shrinks below the rim; an overhanging one is sawn off level afterwards with a serrated knife.
- The offcuts make good cookies — 8 minutes at 175 °C.

- Freezes three months raw, in the tin.

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