

**Title:** **Pie Squared, Irrisistibly Easy Sweet & Savory Slab Pies. 2018**  
**Author:** **Barrow, Cathy**  
**Genre:** *Cookbook*  
**Subject:** *How to: baking*  
**Hook:** *Slab (sheet pan) pie*  
**Reviewer's opinion:** *Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned pie baker, I think this book is the ultimate cookbook for pie baking*  
**Personal recommendation:** *I'd give this book a five-star rating.*

Reviewed by **Alice Marcus Solovy**

TBI member

Although Martha Stewart did an earlier version of a slab pie, Cathy Barrow was intrigued enough to try her own. **After four months of creating recipes, she made 193 slab pies.** The ratio of ingredients in a slab pie for a 9" by 13" by 1-inch deep pan is different than the one for a round pie. A slab pie uses **twice as much crust, but half the filling.** Slab pies are easier to portion than round pies. Kathy includes a template for slicing a slab pie. Depending on how many servings you desire, the slices per pie can vary between 8 and 20. A slab pie is an easy way to serve a crowd.

For equipment, a 9" x 13" by 1-inch deep baking pan is needed. Other equipment suggested, but not necessary: rolling pin (yes, you can make a piecrust without rolling it out!), ruler, bench scraper, pastry brushes, full-size (7-cup) food processor, baking (pizza) stone, scales, parchment paper or silicone baking mats, pastry wheel, and cookie cutters

Kathy likes to use the middle oven rack for baking a slab pie. She **prefers King Arthur flour (so do !!)** with Gold medal flour as a good substitute (me, too!) Her recipes use ice cold, briefly frozen, unsalted American made butter. (My preference for pie dough is a mix of unsalted butter and solid state vegetable shortening.) Kathy says that any added liquid must be ice cold. She says that this will prevent the fat in the crust from melting. She uses Diamond Crystal Kosher salt and says that if using Morton's Kosher salt use a little less. (I use plain table salt.) She adds that a warm filling should be chilled before putting it into a raw crust, so that the filling doesn't toughen the crust. Kathy suggests

that savory fillings be made a day ahead so flavors blend. According to Kathy, **speed and cold are important** when mixing ingredients for the crust. Have everything ready and she says that mixing the dough and refrigerating it should take three minutes. Keep the dough refrigerated four hours. She prefers to use a scale to weigh ingredients rather than measuring ingredients with measuring cups. This also saves clean up. Pie dough can be mixed by hand, in a food processor, or in a stand mixer. The recipes in this book are written for a food processor.

There are directions for finishing the pie edges five different ways. There are directions for making different lattice tops. Recipes are for 14 different pie crusts, some standard, some sweet, some savory, and some to be made by pressing them in place rather than rolling them. Recipes for toppings, glazes, garnishes, and streusels are also in the book.

The savory pie recipes include “Southern-Style Tomato Slab Pie With A Cheddar Cheese Crust” to serve 12-16, “Zucchini, Feta, And Kalamata Olive Slab Pie With A Puff Pastry Crust” to serve 12, and “Nicoise-Style Tuna And Spring Greens Slab Pie With A Pretzel Crust” to serve 8. Chapter Four’s Sweetie Pies include various fruit pies. Among the sweet pies, there are “Raspberry Rugelach Slab Pie With A Cream Cheese Crust” to serve 16-24, “Sugar-Free Fig Slab Pie With A Cream Cheese Crust” to serve 18-24, and “Chocolate Pecan Slab Pie With A Chocolate Crust” to serve 12-24. Left-overs can be refrigerated. Slab pies that don’t contain dairy, eggs, or gelatin can be frozen. A Resources section at the back of the book can tell you where some ingredients can be purchased.

**Whether you are a beginner or a seasoned pie baker**, I think this book is the ultimate cookbook for pie baking. The directions are complete and simple; the ingredients are easy to find. For anyone who likes to bake pies it is an ideal resource. The recipes lend themselves to easy entertaining and also make up into something easy to bring to someone else’s home. I’d give this book a five-star rating.

Note: Alice has been baking pies since she was twelve years old. She once had a few cooking columns in the “JUF News” and had won a few recipe contests elsewhere. As a Contributing Editor to SEARCH, a now defunct genealogy journal that had a world-wide circulation, Alice had several book reviews published.