

## Q&A

### How can I get the odor of onions and garlic out of my wooden cutting board?

—Sandra Peters, via email

**A** Ted Gravenhorst Jr. responds: Lemon or lime juice and a little salt will go a long way to reducing odor. First, sprinkle your cutting board with either kosher or table salt. Cut a lemon or lime into quarters and use these quarters to rub the salt into the board, squeezing juice onto the board as you go. Let the board sit for two to three minutes and then wipe it clean with a damp cloth. That should do the trick.

*Ted Gravenhorst Jr. is the vice president of sales and marketing at John Boos & Co., a manufacturer of premium-quality butcher block products.*

### I love to make ice cream, but when I store it in my freezer, it always gets icy and grainy. How can I prevent this?

—Will Sparks, Charlottesville, Virginia

**A** Jon Snyder responds: Homemade ice cream tastes best fresh, so you don't want to store it for too long. (If you've made a good batch, it'll probably be gone pretty fast anyway.) But a few tips can help maintain the smooth texture of your ice cream. First, try using egg yolks or a bit of neutral apricot or peach preserve in your base preparation; these ingredients act as natural stabilizers. Once the ice cream is frozen, don't thaw and refreeze it repeatedly—you can really thaw and re-freeze only once without any noticeable effect on the ice cream's taste and texture. After that, ice crystals begin to form and any smooth texture deteriorates. If you're planning to thaw your ice cream just once, store it at your freezer's coldest temperature; store it at 10° to 15°F higher if you're hoping to dig in over the course of a few days. Finally, ice

cream shouldn't generally be kept for more than a week (this goes for good-quality store-bought, too), although this can be extended by a few weeks if your home freezer is very cold and you don't freeze and thaw too often.

*Jon Snyder is the owner of Il Laboratorio del Gelato, an artisan ice cream company in New York City.*

### When I roll out pie dough, it usually ends up looking more like the state of Georgia than a circle. How do I get an even, round shape?

—Kyra Sanders, via email

**A** Carolyn Weil responds: More than anything, getting a perfect round out of your pie dough takes practice, but here are a few pointers to set you on the right track. First, it helps to start with dough that's been formed into the right shape and is at the right temperature. After mixing, shape the dough into a round, flat patty, similar to a half-pound hamburger. If the recipe calls for chilling the dough before rolling, don't chill

rolled out. Let it sit at room temperature for a few minutes to warm up to an ideal temperature when it feels cool to the touch and is pliable—it should be able to bend in the middle.

Before you start to roll, tap the pin a couple of times horizontally across the disk and then vertically, like a crosshatch. This flattens the disk slightly without causing it to lose its round shape. Then give the dough a quarter turn, casting a little flour underneath to be sure it isn't sticking before you begin to roll.

Your rolling technique is key. Never roll in a back-and-forth motion—that just pushes the dough back and forth, not out, and can activate gluten development, which makes the pastry tough. Instead, start from the center of the dough and, using a strong, sweeping motion, roll to the top edge, stopping the pressure on your rolling pin ¼ inch before the edge. Then roll from the center of the dough to the bottom edge. Rotate the dough a quarter turn, sweep a little flour underneath if needed, and immediately repeat those two rolls, from center to top rim and then center to bottom rim. Rotate the dough, sweep some flour, and repeat. The faster the dough is rolled out, the cooler it remains and the less sticky it will be. Using this method, you should be able to roll the dough into a circle in about twenty quick strokes. This should give you a nice round of dough that doesn't resemble any of the fifty states.

*Carolyn Weil is the author of two cookbooks from the Williams-Sonoma collection: Pie & Tart and, most recently, Fruit Dessert. ♦*

Have a question of general interest about cooking? Send it to Q&A, Fine Cooking, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506, or by email to [fcqa@taunton.com](mailto:fcqa@taunton.com), and we'll find a cooking professional with the answer.



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