

Pâte à Choux (Choux Pastry) Puffs

Our Young Chefs, 2015

Makes approximately 2 cups choux pastry dough; enough for 24 golf-ball-size cream puffs

Pâte à choux (pronounced pah tah shoo') is the French name for a pastry dough that is called choux paste or choux pastry in English. Choux pastry is easy to make and very versatile. Small baked choux puffs filled with a savory filling, such as chicken salad, makes an elegant hors d'oeuvre. Filled with whipped cream, they become cream puffs; filled with ice cream and topped with chocolate sauce they are profiteroles.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup plus 3 tablespoons
(6 ounces) unbleached
all-purpose flour

4 large eggs, room temperature
1 large egg white, room
temperature

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (4 ounces) water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (4.1 ounces) milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick/4 ounces)
unsalted
butter, cut into 16 pieces
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt



Cream Puff



Profiterole

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the pâte à choux dough: Measure the **flour** using the lightly spoon and level method OR by weighing. Sift the **flour**; set aside.



Liquid measuring cup

Combine the **eggs** and **egg white** in a liquid measuring cup. The amount should be **1 cup** (8.6 ounces). Discard any amount of **egg** that is more than 1 cup (8.6 ounces). Set aside.

Heat the liquid ingredients: In a medium saucepan, combine the **water**, **milk**, **butter** and **salt**. Place over medium-high heat; bring to a rolling boil, stirring a couple of times with a wooden spoon. (It is important that the **butter** is cut into the recommended small pieces so that they are melted and blended by the time the **water** comes to a boil to avoid any significant/ unnecessary **water** evaporation.)

Add the flour: When the **liquid mixture** comes to a boil, remove the saucepan from the heat; add the **sifted flour** all at one time. Stir the mixture vigorously with the wooden spoon until the **dough paste** pulls away from the sides of the saucepan in one mass. (When adding the **flour**, it is crucial that it is stirred in *all in at once*; work quickly to incorporate it. If it is not mixed in this manner, the **choux paste** will have lumps that will be impossible to get rid of.)

Briefly cook the dough: Return the saucepan to low heat; cook, stirring constantly over the heat, for up to 3 minutes, pressing the **dough paste mixture** around the pan and against the bottom to dry out the **dough**. The **dough paste** should be smooth and dry; the **dough** should register 175° to 180°F on an instant-read thermometer.

Add the eggs: Transfer the **dough paste** to the bowl of a stand electric mixer OR to a medium mixing bowl if using a hand-held electric mixer. On low speed, mix the **dough** for about 1 minute to slightly cool the **dough**. (Use the *paddle blade*, if available for the mixer used, on speed 2.) After 1 minute, add the **eggs**, *one at a time, mixing thoroughly after the addition of each egg.* ➡

* It is desirable for cream puffs to rise quickly in the hot oven to become hollow containers for fillings. One 'trick' that assists this is to have a baking sheet pan preheating in the oven as the oven is preheating so that when the baking sheet pan of cream puff shapes is placed in the oven to bake (sheet pans of equal size), it is placed on top of the preheated pan. This procedure gives a quick boost of direct heat to the bottom of the choux pastries encouraging/facilitating a successfully high rise.

Water

EGG WASH (optional)

1 egg

1 teaspoon water

When all of the **eggs** are incorporated, stop the mixer. Do not over-mix or the **dough** may become slightly tough. Check the consistency of the **dough** by lifting up a spoonful of the **dough** and, tilting the spoon, allowing the dough to run off the spoon. The **dough** should be thin enough to drop off of the spoon but should not run off before the count of 10 to 12. If the **dough** is too thick add a little **water**, a tablespoon at a time, with the mixer running on low speed. Check the consistency again.

Shape the cream puff pastries: Preheat the oven to 425°F.

Place 1 or 2 empty baking sheet pans in the preheating oven.* Line one or two baking sheet pans with parchment paper. Following are three options for creating the **cream puff shapes**:

1. With a soup spoon or serving spoon, scoop about a **3-tablespoon amount of cream puff dough**. Using a second spoon, push it off the first spoon onto a parchment-paper-lined baking sheet pan. Place the shapes 2 inches apart.



2. Using a #24 scoop/disher (orange handle), scoop **cream puff dough**, place 2 inches apart on a parchment-paper-lined baking sheet pan.

3. Fit a pastry bag or zipclose plastic bag with a large plain decorator tip; fill with **cream puff dough**. Holding the piping bag vertically, pipe the **cream puff dough** onto a parchment-paper-lined baking sheet pan in **1¼- to 1½-inch diameter rounds or balls**, placed 2 inches apart. Dip a fingertip into **water**; with a wet finger pat down any tips that stand up after piping.



Optional egg wash: Combine the **egg** and **water**; mix vigorously with a fork to blend. Using a pastry brush, lightly brush the choux pastry puffs with the **egg wash**, gently patting the dough with the side of the brush.

Bake pâte à choux pastries: Place the baking sheet pans in the oven at 425°F; *do not open the oven for the first 15 or so minutes*. Do not overcrowd the oven. If the oven is small, bake only one sheet pan at a time. *After 15 minutes, lower the oven to 375°*. Bake most individual-sized shapes for an additional 10 to 20 minutes, until browned and dry. Once the **pastries** are removed from the oven pierce with a paring knife immediately to release any residual steam while the **cream puffs** cool as one last assurance of successful **choux puffs**. If time and space permits, allow the **puffs** to cool in the oven as the turned-off oven cools down with the oven door open. →

Make-ahead options: The **choux dough** should not be made very far in advance of shaping and baking the **pastries**. **Already-baked pastries** can be frozen for up to a year. Do not fill with fillings before freezing. **Already-baked pastries** should be frozen while still barely warm by wrapping them in a plastic bag or aluminum foil. To thaw, let them stand for 45 minutes at room temperature or, preferably, place in a 375°F oven for 8 to 12 minutes, after removing them directly from the freezer.

This recipe can successfully be multiplied as many times as needed. It may be necessary to add an additional egg for every 3 to 4 times the recipe is multiplied.



Cream properly whipped

INGREDIENTS

2 cups heavy whipping cream
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **plus** 2 tablespoons confectioners' (powdered) sugar
Pinch salt
2 teaspoons vanilla extract



Cream properly whipped

Cream over-whipped



Whipped Cream Filling

*The French name for whipped cream is **crème chantilly** (pronounced **krehm shahn~ téé/yee**)! Consider including lightly sweetened slices of fruit, such as strawberries or peaches, when filling the cream puffs with whipped cream.*

DIRECTIONS

Place a medium-large mixing bowl **PLUS** a balloon whisk **OR** beaters to a hand-held electric mixer in the refrigerator to chill for 10 to 15 minutes before beating the cream.

Whip the cream: In the chilled mixing bowl, combine the **heavy whipping cream**, **confectioners' sugar**, **salt** and **vanilla**. Either by hand using a balloon whisk **OR** using a hand-held electric mixer, whip the **cream** vigorously as it builds volume. Stop whipping when the **cream** is fluffy, holds its shape but is still **slightly/barely** loose. (There is a fine line when it turns from just right to too stiff and over-whipped; it is not desirable when the texture begins to be stiff, firm and slightly curdled in texture.)

Do not over- whip the cream. Do you know what happens if the cream is over-whipped?

Fill the cream puffs: Using a serrated knife, cut the **cream puff pastries** in half horizontally. Following are two options for adding the **cream filling** to the **cream puffs**:

1. With a soup spoon or serving spoon, scoop about a **3-tablespoon amount** of **whipped cream**. Using a second spoon, push it off the first spoon to fill the base of a **cream puff pastry**.
2. Fit a pastry bag or zipclose plastic bag with a large star or plain decorator tip; fill with **whipped cream**. Holding ➡

the piping bag vertically, pipe the **cream filling** to fill the base of the **cream puff pastry** with approximately a **3-tablespoon amount of whipped cream filling**.

GARNISH

Confectioners' (powdered) sugar

Assemble and garnish the cream puffs: Top the **filled cream puff base** with the **pastry top**. Repeat the filling process for all of the cream puffs. Lightly top the **cream puffs** with **powdered sugar** sprinkled from/through a fine sieve **OR** a sugar shaker.

Serve: Serve the **cream puffs** **immediately OR within the next 30 minutes**. **Cream puffs** cannot be filled very long before serving because the filling immediately begins to soften the crispy integrity of the **pâte à choux cream puff** pastry.
