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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 cup plus 3 tablespoons (6 ounces)</td>
<td>unbleached</td>
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<tr>
<td>all-purpose flour</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 large eggs, room temperature</td>
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<td>1 large egg white, room temperature</td>
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<tr>
<td>½ cup (4 ounces) water</td>
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<td>½ cup (4.1 ounces) milk</td>
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<tr>
<td>¼ cup (1 stick/4 ounces) unsalted butter</td>
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<td>¼ teaspoon salt</td>
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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.

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.
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.

* 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

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.

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**Whipped Cream Filling**

The French name for whipped cream is *crème chantilly* (pronounced krehm shahn~ tee/yeet). 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.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>GARNISH</th>
<th>Assembly 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.</th>
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</thead>
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Confectioners' (powdered) sugar

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.