

Cream Puffs

Basic Cream Puff Paste:

Makes 12 large cream puffs or 12 large éclairs or 36 miniature cream puffs (profiteroles)

Ingredients:

1 cup water

¼ teaspoon salt

½ cup (1 stick) butter

1 cup sifted flour

1 teaspoon sugar

4 eggs

This simple basic paste of European origin is the start for all the airy cream puffs and éclairs that follow. The puffiness of these hollow crisp-brown shells depends solely on the steam created when the heat of the oven expands the water in the dough.

1. Heat water, butter, sugar & salt to a full rolling boil in a large saucepan.
2. Add flour all at once. Stir vigorously with a wooden spoon until mixture forms a thick smooth ball that leaves sides of pan clean (about 1 minute). Remove from heat; cool slightly.
3. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition until paste is shiny-smooth. Paste will separate as you add each egg, but with continued beating it will smooth out.
4. Shape, following instructions with recipe of your choice

Viennese Mocha-Nut Crown: (wow!)

Makes 6 servings

½ recipe Basic Cream Puff Paste

Chocolate Praline Filling:

*1/2 cup hazelnuts or almonds,
unblanched*

1/3 cup dry cocoa (not a mix)

1/3 cup sugar

1/2 cup powdered sugar

1/3 cup water

Chocolate icing (recipe follows)

2 cups whipping cream

Coffee Butter Cream (recipe follows)

A regal dessert that would have pleased the Emperor Franz Josef himself, truly a royal treat.

1. Make *Basic Cream Puff Paste*. Draw a 7" circle on an ungreased cookie sheet, using a saucer or lid as a guide. Spoon paste in 6

mounds, spacing evenly just inside circle. Puffs should almost touch (alternatively, press paste through a pastry bag).

2. Bake at 400° for 40 minutes, or until puffed and golden brown. With a small knife, make small slits in ring to let steam escape. Turn off heat; leave ring in oven 5 minutes longer. Remove to wire rack' then let cool completely.
3. Make *Chocolate Praline Filling*: Combine nuts, sugar and water in a small heavy skillet. Bring to boiling, stirring constantly. Boil rapidly, uncovered until nuts make a popping sound, ~10 minutes, remove from heat, stir with a wooden spoon until sugar crystallizes and becomes dry. Return to pan to heat; cook over low heat just until sugar starts to melt and form a glaze on nuts. Turn out on a cookie sheet; separate with fork; cool completely. Crush with a rolling pin or whirl in a blender until almost powdery. Beat cream with cocoa and powdered sugar until stiff in a large bowl; fold in crushed nuts; chill.
4. To assemble: Split ring in half horizontally. Scoop out any filaments of soft dough.
5. Place bottom half of ring on serving plate. Fill with *Chocolate Praline Filling*. Place top of ring in place. Spoon *Chocolate Icing* over each puff. Decorate top with small rosettes of *Coffee Butter Cream*. Garnish with whole nuts, if you wish. Refrigerate 1 hour or until ready to serve.

Chocolate Icing – Combine 1 square unsweetened chocolate, 1 tablespoon butter, 2 teaspoons brandy & 1 tablespoon water in a small bowl. Place in a pan of simmering water, stirring occasionally until chocolate is melted. Remove from heat; stir in ½ cup powdered sugar. If icing is too thick add more hot water. Keep warm.

Coffee Butter Cream – Dissolve ¼ teaspoon instant coffee in ½ teaspoon water in a small bowl. Add 1 tablespoon soft butter and ¼ cup powdered sugar. Beat with a fork until smooth. Spoon into a cake decorator fitted with a small star tip.

Raspberry Gateau
Makes 8 servings

1 package (10 ounces frozen patty shells

1 recipe Basic Cream Puff Paste

Raspberry Cream Filling:

2 packages (10 ounces each) frozen raspberries, thawed *1½ cups whipping cream*
1 teaspoon unflavored gelatin *2 tablespoons powdered sugar*

With the basic paste plus convenient patty shells and raspberries from the frozen food case, you have the start of an amazingly easy dessert.

1. Remove patty shells from package. Thaw at room temperature for 30 minutes.
2. Place 3 rounds of pastry, overlapping slightly, lengthwise on a lightly floured pastry board; place remaining 3 on top. Roll to an 18x5" rectangle. If patties separate, moisten with a few drops of water. Place on an ungreased large cookie sheet; trim edges evenly, prick all over with a fork; chill.
3. Make *Basic Cream Puff Paste*. Spoon paste into a pastry bag fitted with a large plain tip. Press out part of past onto the rectangle of pastry 1/2" in from the edge, to form a border. Press out remaining paste into small mounds on the same cookie sheet, to make tiny puffs.
4. Bake all at 400° for 40 minutes or until puffed and golden brown. Cool completely on the cookie sheet on a rack.
5. Make *Raspberry Cream Filling*: Drain raspberries. Measure ¾ cup of juice (save remaining juice to use in a gelatin dessert). Select about 16 who raspberries for garnish; place on foil; put back into freezer until ready to use.
6. Sprinkle gelatin over juice in a small saucepan; let stand 5 minutes. Dissolve over very low heat. Cool; chill until as thick as unbeaten egg white.
7. Beat cream with powdered sugar until stiff in a medium-size bowl. Reserve 1 cup for garnish. Fold drained raspberries & partly set gelatin into remaining cream.
8. Assemble dessert: Place pastry base on a long serving dish or board. Cut a slice from top of 7 or 8 puffs and fill each with *Raspberry Cream*; replace tops. Fill remaining puffs with ice cream, if you wish and freeze or another meal. Spoon remaining filling into pastry base.
9. Place filled puffs on top. Fill pastry bag, fitted with a start tipe, with remaining whipped cream.
10. Press border of whipped cream all around edge. Chill until serving time. Garnish with whole reserved berries just before serving.

Strawberry Cream Puffs

Makes 6 puffs

½ recipe Basic Cream Puff Paste

Strawberry Cream Filling:

1 pint fresh strawberries

¼ cup sugar

1 cup whipping cream

½ teaspoon almond extract

powdered sugar

Fresh strawberry filling in these golden puffs brings a welcome taste of spring to a dreary winter.

1. Make *Basic Cream Puff Paste*.
2. Drop paste by rounded tablespoonfuls into 6 even mounds, 2" apart, onto an ungreased large cookie sheet.
3. Bake at 400° for 40 minutes or until puffed and golden brown. Remove to wire rack; cool completely.
4. Make filling: Wash strawberries, set aside 6 for garnish. Hull remaining berries; slice into a medium-size bowl; stir in 3 tablespoons of the sugar. Chill at least 30 minutes.
5. Beat cream with remaining sugar and the almond extract until stiff in a medium-size bowl. Chill.
6. Just before serving, cut a slice from the top of each puff; remove any filaments of soft dough. Fold sliced berries into cream, spoon about 1/3 cup into each puff; replace tops. Sieve powdered sugar over the top of each puff. Arrange on a serving plate and garnish with strawberries and mint leaves, if you wish.

Chocolate Éclairs

Makes 12 éclairs

1 recipe Basic Cream Puff Paste

Chocolate Icing (see Viennese Mocha-Nut Crown recipe)

Vanilla Custard Cream Filling:

3 cups milk

¾ cup sifted flour

1 cup sugar

6 egg yolks

1 teaspoon vanilla

Luscious custard-cream-filled delights, shiny-bright.

1. Make *Basic Cream Puff Paste*.

2. Attach a large plain tip to pastry bag; spoon paste into bag. Press dough out into 12 4"-strips; 1½ apart, on an ungreased large cookie sheet. Or, you may spoon paste into finger-length strips.
3. Bake at 400° for 40 minutes or until puffed and golden brown. Remove from cookie sheet to wire rack; cool completely.
4. Make *Vanilla Custard Cream Filling*: Combine flour and sugar in a medium-size saucepan. Stir in milk slowly. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly; lower heat. Continue cooking 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly, or until mixture is quite thick; remove from heat.
5. Beat egg yolks slightly in a medium-size bowl. Gradually beat in about 1 cup of the hot milk mixture. Pour all back into saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Remove from heat; stir in vanilla. Place a piece of wax paper directly on surface of filling to prevent a thick skin from forming. Chill at least 2 hours.
6. To fill éclairs: Make a small hole in the end of each éclair with a small knife. Fit pastry bag with plain tip, fill with *Vanilla Custard Cream*. Press filling into éclairs. Or, you may split éclairs lengthwise, then spoon in filling.
7. Prepare *Chocolate Icing*. Ice tops of éclairs. Garnish with whipped cream and pistachio nuts.