

Make It Sweet.

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Pâte a Choux

Cream Puffs, Eclairs and More!

This is the basic choux paste dough that can be used to make sweet and savory pastries such as cream puffs, eclairs, “churro balls” and gougères. This is a simple and versatile recipe and technique. All you need is a pot, a stiff wooden spoon and some elbow grease. The eggs can be incorporated with either a hand mixer or a stand mixer with a paddle attachment. I think that the consistency is better though and the pastry is more tender when it is made by hand.

- 1 cup whole milk
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter (1 stick)
- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour (5 1/3 oz or 150 g)
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup eggs (4 large eggs)

In a sauce pan, gently heat the milk and butter until the butter is melted. Once it is melted, bring the liquids just to a boil over high heat. Turn off the heat and add the flour all at once and stir rapidly. The flour absorbs the water and the dough will start pulling away from the sides of the pan. Remove from the heat and keep stirring until the dough forms a ball - another minute or two. Return to medium heat and stir constantly until dough just barely starts to coat the bottom of the pan. Remove from heat and let the dough cool a little bit – about 5 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time mixing rapidly. Make sure that the egg is fully combined into the paste before adding the next one. Batter will appear to separate at first but will then become smooth. Mixture should be glossy and just stiff enough to hold soft peaks and fall softly from a spatula.

The choux paste can be cooked immediately at this point or refrigerated for up to a day until ready to use.

Choux paste can be piped and frozen unbaked. When ready to bake – just place frozen pieces on parchment lined sheet pan and bake as usual. The dough does not need to thaw before baking.



Clockwise from the top:
cream puffs, churro balls and eclairs

Cream Puffs

Preheat oven to 425° F. For cream puffs use large round or star tips in a pastry bags to pipe uniform size mounds up to golf ball size onto a parchment lined baking sheet. Be careful not to pipe them too closely together since they will puff. – up to 2 inches apart for large buns. Press the peaks down with a moistened finger. Bake in a hot oven (425° F for 10 minutes, turn the temperature down to 350° F and bake for about half hour more for large buns. The smaller they are, the faster they will bake. They should be puffed, golden brown and sound hollow when you tap the bottom of the puff.

Let the buns cool completely before adding fillings. Pastry cream, bavarian cream, chantilly cream are all good choices. We will be using whipped Pastry Pride to lighten pre-made bavarian cream. Use a tip #230 Bismark tip to fill. Squeeze a good amount of filling – you want it filled all the way – but not so much that it cracks. These are best served very soon after filling. They can be filled and refrigerated for up to several hours or up to a couple of days depending on the filling before serving – but they are freshest right after filling.

Eclairs

Preheat oven to 425° F. Pipe longer sausage shaped lines with large round or star tips for eclairs. Bake as above for Cream Puffs starting at 425° F for 10 minutes, turn the temperature down to 350° F and bake for about half hour more for large eclairs. They should be puffed and golden when done and be light in weight and sound hollow.. Eclairs can be spit and filled or filled with a Bismark #230 tip. I like to drizzle chocolate onto eclairs and sprinkle with Vermicelli (chocolate sprinkles – not pasta).

Churro Balls

These are fried balls of delicious dough coated in cinnamon and sugar – yum!

1 Tbsp vanilla bean paste

2 C Granulated sugar

2Tbsp cinnamon (more to taste)

Heat vegetable oil in medium depth sauce pan to 350° F. Mix vanilla bean paste into choux dough. This is the amount to add for a full recipe of choux paste, so adjust accordingly if you are using more or less. Pipe choux paste through a large star tip and use a small spatula or knife to cut it off as piping. Use a slotted spoon and turn the balls around in the oil frying until golden, brown and delicious (my fav Alton Brown phrase). Pull out with the slotted spoon and place into heat resistant bowl containing the sugar and cinnamon mixture. The full recipe makes about 100 churro balls. Mix and enjoy!

Gougeres

This is a savory application for pate a choux. We will mix in herbs, parmesan cheese and cooked crumbled bacon. You can vary the herbs and hard cheeses and leave out the bacon entirely if desired – but these are very delicious this way. Watch out – they are addicting!

4 oz grated parmesan cheese

4 oz cooked and crumbled bacon

2 Tbsp fresh herbs –

we are using 1 Tbsp rosemary and 1 Tbsp thyme – finely chopped

1 tsp coarse black pepper

Preheat oven to 375°F. Mix all ingredients into the choux paste.

With a large round tip, pipe into small (3/4”) mounds on a parchment lined baking sheet. Bake for 20 – 30 mins depending on the size. The full recipe makes about 120 gougeres.

Serve warm or at room temp.



Other Ideas

Pipe designs and use for crunch element on plated desserts.

Pipe choux paste on edge of flat pie dough bake and voila – you have a tart to fill and enjoy.

There are so many uses. Have fun and enjoy!