

PÂTE À CHOUX

MAKES ABOUT 30 CREAM PUFFS

This pastry dough—which in French is *pâte à choux* and in English choux paste—is one of the best pastries to have in your bag of dessert tricks. It is really easy to make, but can create some incredibly impressive desserts, from éclairs and cream puffs to the showstopping [St. Honoré Cake](#). **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** pastry bag, #8 plain tip

1/2 cup water

1/2 cup milk

6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) unsalted butter

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 tablespoon sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

1/2 cup + 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

5 large eggs

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a medium, deep pot, combine the water, milk, butter, vanilla, sugar, and salt. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and add the flour all at once, stirring until the mixture forms a dough. I strongly suggest using a wooden spoon for this step. Continue to stir the dough over low heat for 1 1/2 minutes to help dry out the dough a bit. This is what starts to form the texture of the puff. When the dough starts to stick and form a slight skin on the bottom of the pot, take it off heat.

Transfer the hot dough to a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat the dough on medium speed for about 3 minutes or until the steam stops escaping from the top of the

dough. Reduce the mixer speed to low, add the eggs one at a time and beat well after each addition until fully incorporated into the dough. (The dough will break apart into pieces and look slithery, but don't worry, it comes back together.) After all the eggs have been added, beat on medium speed for 1 minute more.

At this point the dough is ready to be used in a number of different ways, but one of the commonest uses (especially in this book) is to make cream puffs. The puffs that get used in this book are smallish, like a profiterole (if you've ever had one of those). To make the puffs, fit a pastry bag with a #8 plain tip and scoop the dough into the bag. Pipe dollops onto the baking sheet, spacing them 1 inch apart.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes; rotate the pan front to back halfway through. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F and bake for 10 minutes longer to help dry out the puffs.

Let the cream puffs cool on the pan before filling (see *Chef It Up!*, below). If making ahead, store the unfilled puffs airtight at room temperature overnight or frozen for longer storage.

chef it up!

Other than the [St. Honoré Cake](#), which is an ultrafancy cream puff presentation, I fill cream puffs with [Vanilla](#) or [Chocolate Pastry Cream](#) or a [Lemon Cream](#). To fill a puff, simply poke a hole in the bottom of the puff with the tip of a knife. Fit a pastry bag with a #2 plain tip, fill the bag with the cream, and pipe it into the puffs.

INSIDER TIP • PERFECT PUFFS

To make a beautifully shaped, restaurant-worthy cream puff, wet the tip of your finger and gently press down on the top of the unbaked puff to flatten the peak of dough that comes from piping.