

How To Make Choux Pastry

Course - Dessert

Cuisine - French

Keyword - Pâte à Choux

Cook Time - 60 minutes

Serving - 12 Cream Puffs

Skill level - Moderate

Author - McCall's Cook Book, 1963

Of all the wonderful delicacies the French have given the world, perhaps my favorite is Choux Pastry (or pâte à choux).

Choux (pronounced like "Shoe") One of the most versatile doughs, as well as one of the most flavorful, in my opinion.

It requires a little bit of technique, speed and skill to execute, but once you understand what you're looking for, you'll always get it right.

Making Choux Pastry is not like most other batters, where you simply mix things together in a bowl and you're good to go - no, the French knew what's up and found this recipe requires a bit of cooking first by boiling some water with butter, quickly adding flour into the sauce pot and working around, while adding eggs to give a gluey, sticky dough that generally lives in a pastry bag because it's too unwieldy otherwise to handle.

But this single batter can do *so much!*

You can make Eclairs, profiteroles or Cream Puffs, Churros, beignets, donuts, gougères, Parisienne Gnocchi and literally *dozens* more.

It can be Steamed, Boiled, Baked, Fried - Come On!

This dough is The Precious from LOTR - the one dough to rule them all.

Let's get at it.

What is Choux Pastry?

- Choux pastry, or pâte à choux, is a delicate pastry dough used in many pastries. Basic ingredients usually only include butter, water, flour and eggs. Instead of a raising agent, choux pastry employs its high moisture content to create steam, as the water in the dough evaporates when baked, puffing the pastry.

Why do I have to cook the flour?

- You need to activate the gluten structures in the flour by heating them up enough to gelatinize the starches so it will properly stretch and hydrate when your eggs are added. This gives that gluey texture to your Choux. If you have a thermometer, aim for the batter to be around 165-175°F/ 74-79°C for perfection.

Why are the measurements in Metric?

- Generally, the Metric system is better for baking because of the accuracy. You can get away with using 1 cup of flour, but weight is the best way to control a number of variables that go into making Choux Pastry and is highly recommended, if you have a digital scale.

INGREDIENTS

235g Water (1C)

84g Unsalted Butter, cut into small cubes (6 tablespoons)

8g Sugar (2 teaspoons), if making a sweet batter.

2g Kosher Salt (1/2 teaspoon)

128g All-Purpose Flour, Sifted (4.5 ounces)

200g Large Eggs (about 4 eggs)

METHOD

In a 3-quart sauce pan, combine your water, butter, salt and sugar (if needed) and bring to a boil.

Once the liquid is boiling and the butter is melted, remove from the heat and add all the flour at once.

With a wooden spoon or heavy spatula, mix until no lumps remain (this is easier when you sift your flour) and a dough begins to form.

Return to the heat and reduce heat to Medium to cook the dough, stirring often to prevent burning.

When a thin film forms at the bottom of the pan and a thermometer indicates your dough is between 165-175°F/74-79°C, remove from heat.

Allow to cool for several minutes, or until it's below 145°F/63°C.

You can transfer to a Stand Mixer with a paddle attachment, like a KitchenAide, for ease or do the next steps by hand with a wooden spoon in a mixing bowl.

Begin by adding your eggs, 1 at a time, beating together on medium speed until each egg is fully incorporated.

The batter will seem repelled by the eggs at first, but after a minute or so, the eggs will incorporate.

Transfer to a piping bag to use the dough right away or within 2 hours at room temperature.

You can now pipe eclairs, profiteroles and various other shapes on a sheet pan with parchment or a silicon mat and bake to get beautiful treats like you'd find in a French Patisserie, boil in water to make wonderful Parisienne Gnocchi or Fry to make some delicious Churros and donuts!

NOTES:

- The Choux batter can be refrigerated up to 3 days and frozen up to 4 months, if necessary - but you'll use it way before then.

- If you don't have a piping bag, you can absolutely use a Zip-Lock bag and simply add the batter and cut the corner to pipe.
- It's helpful to have *everything* ready before you try to make this pastry batter.
- This dough is perfect for sweet and savory meals, like gougères, which are cheesy puffs that have cheese mixed in the batter!