



For the Love of Good Food

Festive Eclairs/Profiteroles

The basic choux pastry dough is simpler to use than other pastry as it is either spooned or piped on to baking trays, ready for baking in a hot oven.

The pastry can be made in advance and filled at the last minute. You can serve them hot with a thick white sauce mixture flavored with cheese, ham, mushrooms, chicken, or cold with a mayonnaise flavored with shrimp, ham etc. For sweet fillings make the pastry cream that follows. This is cooled and then flavored with coffee, fruit purees, chocolate, or a splash of dark rum or Cointreau, then topped with a similar flavored fondant icing (store bought fudge icing). You can fill with whipped cream and top with melted chocolate or even fill with a mixture of cream cheese and some kind of flavoring – fruit, or vegetables, herbs.

Ingredients for choux pastry

2oz butter

$\frac{1}{4}$ pint cold water

2 1/2oz sifted flour

2 beaten eggs

1. Heat oven to 425 F. Place the butter and water in a pan and heat until the butter melts. Bring the mixture to a boil and quickly pour in the sifted flour. Beat it immediately with a wooden spoon, take the pan off the heat and continue to beat until the mixture is smooth and glossy and comes away from the side of the pan.
2. Add one egg and beat it in thoroughly until no traces remain. Add the second egg and again beat it in thoroughly. If you are making savory pastry, add a pinch of salt and pepper, and then mix in. If sweet, add a pinch of salt and a teaspoon of powdered sugar. The mixture is now ready to use.
3. To make little éclairs/choux, place teaspoons of the mixture on a lightly greased baking sheet, spaced well apart. For bigger pastries use a dessert spoon. Or you can pipe little circles, but pat down any crests or these will burn.
4. Bake the choux in preheated oven for 15 minutes. Turn the oven down to moderately hot (375 F) to finish cooking (10-15 minutes). Test to see if the choux pastry is done by lightly pressing the sides. If the sides 'give' under the pressure they need a little longer. If firm to the touch, remove from the oven and slit the sides at the base to let the steam escape. Return to the oven for 5 minutes to dry out. Cool on a wire rack before filling.

Ingredients for Pastry Cream

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups milk flavored with vanilla

3 egg yolks (or liquid egg)

4oz fine sugar

1oz flour + 1oz cornstarch

1. Warm the milk in a pan with the vanilla.
2. In a separate bowl beat together the sugar, flour, cornstarch and egg yolks. Once the milk is warm, slowly pour over the egg mixture and blend thoroughly. Return the mixture to the pan and heat slowly stirring all the time until mixture thickens to heavy custard like consistency.
3. Remove from the heat, spread out on a plate to cool, and keep covered with saran wrap to stop a skin forming. Once cool, you can flavor with melted chocolate, add chopped fruit, or a liqueur. Beat until smooth and fill the choux just before serving.