

Cream Puff Pastry ~ "Cabbage Dough"

(source: frenchfood.about.com)

Pâte à choux is pronounced *paht ah shoo* and translates into English as 'cabbage dough'. Rather an appropriate description, if you peek into your oven while the puffs are baking. They bear a remarkable resemblance to little rows of cabbages...

Eclairs, profiteroles, and cream puffs, favorites of French pastry shops, start with this simple basic dough. Unlike regular doughs, however, *pâte à choux* (pronounced: paht / ah / shoo) is cooked in two stages, first on the stovetop, then in the oven. First, it is cooked on the stove, then removed and eggs are added to make a smooth, sticky dough. Then it is piped onto a tray and baked. The moisture of the eggs turns to steam inside the dough and causes them to puff up and form a little hollow inside, creating the perfect shell that can be filled with either sweet creams or savory fillings for appetizers.

Cream Puffs:

Cream puffs are round shells that can be filled with any variety of things. The classic filling is a sweet pastry cream. The filled cream puff may then be glazed with a chocolate glaze, or simply dusted with powdered sugar.



Cream puffs can also be filled with a savory (not sweet) filling such as chicken salad.

Profiteroles:

These are cream puffs filled with ice cream.

Eclairs:

Eclairs are basically long, skinny cream puffs. They are typically filled with a sweet pastry cream, then glazed with a chocolate icing.



Pâte au choux:

This is the pastry used to make cream puffs, profiteroles, éclairs, and a variety of other pastries.

Remember, *pâte à choux* is cooked in two stages, first on the stovetop, then in the oven.

This recipe will make about 20 small cream puffs.

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 cup water	1/2 cup + 1 Tablespoon flour
1/4 teaspoon salt	3 large eggs, room temperature
1/4 cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces	1 egg beaten, for glaze

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and lightly butter the paper.

1. Heat the water, salt and butter until the butter melts. Bring to a boil and remove from heat.
2. Immediately add the flour and stir quickly with a wooden spoon, until smooth.
3. Set the mixture over low heat and stir for about 30 seconds. Remove and allow to cool for a few minutes.
4. Add 1 egg and beat it thoroughly into the mixture. Beat in the second egg until the mixture is smooth.
5. In a small bowl, beat the third egg. Gradually add enough of this egg to the dough until it becomes shiny and soft enough to just fall from a spoon.
6. Shape the dough while warm according to the recipe using. General guidelines are:
 - a. For cream puffs & profiteroles: Shape mounds of about 1-1/4 inches. Gently push down any points because they will burn. Brush with some egg glaze, being very careful not to spill any on the baking sheet.
 - b. For éclairs: Pipe thick fingers of dough, about 3-inches long, spacing them about 2 inches apart. Brush with egg glaze. Dip a fork in some water and lightly make each pastry with crosswise lines so that it will rise more evenly.
7. Bake 30 minutes or until puffed and brown.

TIPS:

Although a fairly easy dough to make, here are a few tips that will help insure success:

1. Cut the butter into pieces so that it will melt completely by the time the water comes to a boil.
2. Add the flour all at once and beat very vigorously.
3. Allow the dough to cool for a few minutes before adding the eggs otherwise they may cook somewhat and the puffs won't puff.
4. A pastry bag is the easiest way to form either the cream puffs or éclairs. When forming the cream puffs, just make sure to press down the points because they will burn during baking.