

THE CULINARY *Playground*



Eclairs

Makes 8 - 10 mini eclairs

1/2c water
1/4c butter
1/2c flour
2 eggs, room temperature

1/8c + 2T sugar
1T cornstarch
Pinch of salt
1c whole milk
1 egg yolk, slightly beaten
1T butter, softened
1t vanilla

4oz semi-sweet chocolate bar
(do NOT use chips)
1/4c heavy or whipping cream

Preheat oven to 400 degrees

Heat water and butter to a rolling boil in a 1qt saucepan. Stir in flour and continue to stir vigorously until a ball forms. Cook for one minute to cook the flour then remove from the heat. Let cool for a moment or transfer to another bowl to help it cool faster.

Beat in the eggs and continue beating until they are well incorporated and the shine (egg whites) is gone.

Add choux to a 12" piping bag fitted with a large star tip.

Line a cookie sheet with a silpat mat or parchment paper. Pipe choux approximately 4” long and 1.5” wide (pipe one direction and without stopping, go the opposite way, piping close to the first pipe, then return on top of the first two pipes).

Note: choux will grow a bit both high and wide.

Cook 14-18 minutes until golden brown. Do not open the door during the cooking process. Upon removing from the oven, poke the top of each eclair, at each end, with a toothpick to let the air release. Cool on a cooling rack away from any drafts.

While eclairs bake in the oven, make the custard. In a 1qt saucepan, add sugar, salt and cornstarch. Slowly add milk and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a whisk. Mixture will thicken and boil. Allow to boil for 1 minute. Slowly temper the egg yolks by adding small amounts of the hot mixture into the egg yolks, stirring constantly so they don't scramble. Keep adding the hot mixture to the egg yolks until HALF the hot mixture is well incorporated. Pour the egg mixture BACK into the hot mixture and stir well. Boil and stir another minute then remove from the heat and add butter and vanilla. Immediately place in chilled bowls to cool down and refrigerate.

To make ganache, chop the chocolate into small pieces and place in a small ceramic bowl. In a small saucepan, heat the cream over medium heat until it begins to simmer gently (do NOT let it come to a boil). Pour the hot cream over the chocolate and let it sit for 2 minutes. Using a metal spoon or spatula, slowly stir the chocolate and cream until the chocolate has melted and is smooth. Set the bowl aside and let it cool, slightly, at room temperature. *** See note below ***

Fit a 12” piping bag with a large round tip. Fill the bag with the chilled custard, Poking holes at either end of the eclair shell (or from the underside of the eclair shell), gently pipe the custard into the shell. You will feel the filling pressure on the sides of the shell.

DO NOT OVERFILL, it will become a mess. Fill each shell.

Stir the ganache. Holding each filled eclair by its sides, gently dip the top of each eclair into the ganache and immediately turn over and set aside on parchment paper or packaging.

Keep refrigerated until 10 minutes before serving to remove chill.

*** Alternate ganache ***

If you have the time and the desire, you can chill the ganache in the fridge (stirring every 5-7 minutes) When ganache is cold, beat in a bowl with a stand or hand mixer for approximately 4 minutes. Color will become light in color and texture. Add whipped ganache to a piping bag, fitted with a decorative tip, and pipe the whipped chocolate onto each eclair.