

Pâte à Choux (Cream Puff pastry) for Profiteroles

From Pierre Hermé's *Chocolate Desserts*
written by Dorie Greenspan

For 30 large / 50 small puffs

1/2 cup (125 g) milk
1/2 cup (125 g) water
1 stick unsalted butter (4 ounces/115 g), cut up into 8 pieces
1/4 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup (140 grams) all purpose flour
5 large eggs, at room temperature

We made half the recipe:

1/4 cup milk (63 grams)
1/4 water (63 grams)
1/2 stick butter (57 grams)
1/8 tsp sugar
1/8 tsp salt
1/2 cup flour (70 grams)
2 eggs + half of an egg white (see notes)

Bring the milk, water, butter, sugar and salt to a boil in a heavy-bottomed medium saucepan. When the mixture is boiling rapidly, add the flour all at once, reduce heat to medium, and without a second's hesitation, start mixing like mad with a wooden spoon. (I added the flour off the heat, and then returned the pan to the flame, but if Pierre Hermé and Dorie Greenspan do it this way, there is no reason not to do the same; and I followed the "mixing like mad" to the breaking point!). The dough will come together very quickly and a slight crust will form on the bottom of the pan, but you need to keep stirring—vigorously—for another 2-3 minutes to dry the dough. At the end of this time, the dough will be very smooth.

Turn the dough into the bowl of a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, or, if you've still got some elbow grease left, continue by hand. One by one, add the eggs to the dough, beating until each egg is thoroughly incorporated.

Don't be discouraged—as soon as you add the first egg, your lovely dough will separate. Keep working, and by the time you add the third egg, it will start coming together again. When all the eggs are incorporated, the dough will be thick and shiny and when you lift some of it up, it will fall back into the bowl in a ribbon. The dough will be warm—it's supposed to be—and now is the time to use it. Shape the dough using a pastry bag and tip. (I used a small cookie scoop; you can also do it with two tablespoons.) Pipe about 30 mounds of dough, each about 1 1/2 inches across, onto baking sheets lined with parchment paper (or Silpat). Make sure to leave about 2 inches of puff-space between each dollop of dough.

Modifications / Notes

Dorie, in a recent NYT article, recommends trying 4 eggs + one egg white for extra crispness

You do not need sugar in the dough; I like it for a little sweetness, but even for profiteroles, it is not necessary. And if you are using these for a savory preparation, omit the sugar

Pierre Hermé baked these at 375 degrees for about 20 minutes, slipping the handle of a wooden spoon into the oven door after 7 minutes so that it remains slightly ajar and continuing to bake them for another 13 minutes. Dorie notes that you get the most even bake if you rotate the sheets from top to bottom and front to back.

I baked them at 350 degrees for about 25-30 minutes. Not only because the handle of my wooden spoon was broken, but because it is easier and the results were still delicious. You want them to be golden and firm on the outside. The custardy inside should also be cooked, so you can take one out and open it to check. It is normal for them to be mostly hollow. You will fill them with ice cream when ready to serve and drizzle them with chocolate.

When they are at room temperature, fill them with a scoop of your favorite ice cream. Vanilla is traditional, but you can use anything you like.

For the chocolate, you can melt some very good chocolate slowly over boiling water (bain-marie—and make sure the boiling water does not touch

the chocolate) and use just that. You can make it a little more liquid by adding some water or cream.

This makes a fun and elegant dessert. Just don't leave any for the ants!

Below is the recipe for Pierre Hermé's chocolate sauce:

CHOCOLATE SAUCE

Properly bittersweet and just as properly shiny, this sauce is the ideal accompaniment to ice cream desserts, the topper of choice for profiteroles, a good drizzle for cakes and tarts, and a necessary ingredient in Chocolate Glaze (page 254).

- **4½ ounces (130 grams) bittersweet chocolate, preferably Valrhona Guanaja, finely chopped**
- **1 cup (250 grams) water**
- **½ cup (125 grams) crème fraîche, homemade (see page 270) or store-bought, or heavy cream**
- **⅓ cup (70 grams) sugar**

Place all the ingredients in a heavy-bottomed medium saucepan and bring to the boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon, until the sauce thickens very slightly and coats the back of the spoon. (It doesn't really thicken much, but it does really coat the spoon.) Alternatively, you can use the draw-a-line test: Dip the spoon into the sauce and draw your finger down the back of the spoon — if the sauce doesn't run into the track created by your finger, it's done. Be patient — this can take 10 to 15 minutes and shouldn't be rushed. Use the sauce immediately, or allow it to cool, then chill until needed. Reheat the sauce in a bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water or in a microwave oven.

Makes about 1½ cups
(525 grams)

KEEPING: The sauce will keep in a tightly sealed jar in the refrigerator for 2 weeks, or it can be packed airtight and frozen for 1 month. Reheat gently before using.