

Kids' Cooking Camp #4 – Cream Puffs or Gougères

On Friday, we're going to learn how to make cream puffs!! We'll use my go-to recipe for choux (pronounced like "shoe") pastry, which is the same smooth batter you use to make long éclairs or cheesy gougères. Once we make the batter, you can make any of them! You'll need butter, flour and eggs, and then you can fill them with whipped cream (or even ice cream) or make pastry cream with sugar, cornstarch, milk and egg yolks, or make cheesy savoury puffs by stirring in some aged Gouda, Parmesan or Gruyère.

Choux is a completely different process than making other kinds of pastry, which you typically try to keep cold. To make choux pastry (or pâte à choux, which translates to "little cabbages"), you heat butter and water in a saucepan on the stovetop, then stir in the flour, which makes a mixture that looks like mashed potatoes. You then gradually beat in your eggs, and wind up with a batter that's a bit like very thick pudding. From there you can stir in some cheese and make Gougères, or spoon or pipe them into rounds for cream puffs or lengths for éclairs!

Kids' Cooking Camp #4 – Cream Puffs or Gougères!

Friday, Jan 7, 10:00 AM MT (9 AM PT/noon ET) and again at 2 PM MT (1 PT/4 ET)

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84874570071?pwd=ZTAzVXA4TE1KN1EwdnhnK2N0dDJhZz09>

Cream Puffs

If you don't want to make pastry cream from scratch (though it's not hard!) you can fill these with sweetened whipped cream (or coconut cream!) or even ice cream. You can then drizzle them with chocolate ganache, if you like—heat about 1/2 cup whipping cream until it's steaming, pour over about 1 cup chocolate chips or chopped chocolate and let sit for a minute, then whisk until smooth. Drizzle over or dip your cream puffs!

Choux pastry:

- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup butter, cut into pieces
- pinch salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 large eggs

Pastry cream (optional!):

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- pinch salt
- 2 cups milk (preferably 2%, or add some half & half to lighter milk)
- 4 large egg yolks
- 2 Tbsp butter

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

In a medium saucepan, bring the water, butter and salt to a simmer, cooking until the butter melts. Turn the heat all the way down and add the flour all at once. Stir until the dough comes together into a smooth ball, cleaning the sides of the pan. Turn the heat off and stir the ball of dough around for a minute or two to dry it a bit.

Transfer to a bowl and let sit for a few minutes to cool slightly. (If you like, spread the dough out a bit in the bowl to allow it to cool more quickly.) Crack the eggs into a bowl or measuring cup and beat them lightly with a fork.

Pour in about a quarter of the egg and beat with an electric mixer or by hand until combined; it will separate into slimy lumps at first, but then will come together. Add the rest of the egg the same way, about an egg's worth at a time, beating in each addition, until the mixture is smooth and glossy. It should have a consistency thicker than cake batter—you should be able to pipe it.

If you like, spoon the batter into a piping bag fitted with a round or star tip. On a parchment-lined baking sheet, pipe it out into mounds about half the size you'd like them to be once cooked, spacing them at least an inch apart. With dampened fingers, gently tap any pointed tips to keep them from burning. Alternatively, drop the batter in rounded spoonfuls onto your sheet.

Bake for 20 minutes (for small profiteroles) or 30 minutes (for larger profiteroles), until puffed and golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. If you like, poke the side of each profiterole with a bamboo skewer or the tip of a small knife to allow excess steam to escape. (This will keep them crisp.)

To make the pastry cream: whisk together the sugar, cornstarch and salt in a medium saucepan, then whisk in the milk and egg yolks. Place the pan over medium-high heat and cook, adding the butter and whisking as it thickens, until it starts to bubble and thickens to the consistency of pudding. Let it cook for about a minute once it starts to bubble (whisk to keep it from burning); remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla.

If you like, pour the mixture through a sieve into a bowl to get rid of any lumps. (Stir the cream in the sieve to help push it through.) Cover with plastic wrap, putting the plastic directly on the surface to prevent a skin from forming, and refrigerate until well chilled. When you're ready to fill the cream puffs, poke a small hole in the bottom or side of each puff with the tip of a paring knife. Put the pastry cream into a piping bag (or zip-lock bag, and cut off a corner) and pipe into each puff—you'll feel them getting heavier as they fill. If you like, drizzle them with chocolate sauce or dip in chocolate ganache! (Instructions in the intro!)

Makes 2-3 dozen cream puffs.



Gougères

Gougères are delicious little cheese puffs... one of my favourite party foods, even when we can't have parties! It's the same batter and process as the cream puffs, only you stir in some hard cheese at the end. (Gruyère is classic, extra aged Gouda or Parmesan is great.. any cheese that's not too moist or greasy, or it could weigh the puffs down as they bake... though they'd still be delicious!)

1 cup water
1/2 cup butter, cut into pieces
pinch salt
1 cup all-purpose flour
4 large eggs
1 to 1 1/2 cups coarsely grated Gruyère, Parmesan or extra aged Gouda cheese

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

In a medium saucepan, bring the water, butter and salt to a simmer, cooking until the butter melts. Turn the heat all the way down and add the flour all at once. Stir until the dough comes together into a smooth ball, cleaning the sides of the pan. Turn the heat off and stir the ball of dough around for a bit—it will dry a little, and leave a residue on the bottom of the pan.

Transfer to a bowl and let sit for a few minutes to cool slightly. (If you like, spread the dough out a bit to allow it to cool more quickly. Crack the eggs into a bowl or measuring cup and beat them lightly with a fork.

Pour in about a quarter of the egg and beat with an electric mixer or by hand until combined; it will look lumpy at first, but then will come together. Add the rest the same way, about an egg's worth at a time, beating in each addition, until the mixture is smooth and glossy. It should have a consistency thicker than cake batter—almost like soft-serve ice cream. You should be able to pipe it. Stir in the grated cheese if you like, spoon the batter into a piping bag fitted with a round or star tip.

On a parchment-lined baking sheet, pipe it out into mounds about half the size you'd like them to be once cooked, spacing them at least an inch apart. With dampened fingers, gently tap any pointed tips to keep them from burning. Alternatively, drop the batter by the spoonful onto your prepared sheet.

Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until puffed, golden and crisp. Serve warm.
Makes about 2 dozen gougères.