

## Kids' Cooking Camp #5 - Croissant Camp!!

We're going to make croissants together!! My go to recipe is adapted from my friend Giselle Corteau's first cookbook, the Duchess Bakeshop Cookbook (which is fantastic for anyone into baking!) It's simpler than you might think, but there are a lot of steps (mostly rolling and folding) and time between each one. So here's how we'll do it: I've set up the zoom for 9am on Saturday, so we can make our dough.

Many pastry chefs use European-style butter, which has a slightly higher butterfat content than regular butter — you can get some if you like, but it's not necessary... the fat content makes the butter less brittle and more pliable, which can make it easier to roll. Unsalted butter is often used for the same reason, but I actually think croissants have a more buttery flavour when the butter itself has some salt in it, and it will work fine. And if you want to make pain au chocolat, have some dark chocolate at the ready! (Pastry chefs use chocolate batons, but you can just chop a dark chocolate bar into pieces.)

Saturday, January 8 at 9 AM MT (8 PT and 11 ET!)  
Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83140908484?pwd=WUc4OEpqUWkwSkdyWTQzdU10UzQ3dz09>

This is what our day will look like:

9 AM: Croissant Camp starts!! We'll all meet and take out our butter to soften a bit, and then make our dough. We'll then go do our own things and let our dough rise until about noon. (Steps 1-4)

Noon: We'll meet again to make our butter plaque—that means we'll roll our 3/4 cup butter into a thin square-ish slab (using a ziplock baggie, if you have one) to use for our lamination. We'll also roll our dough out into a rectangle, then put it back in the fridge. (Steps 4 & 5)

1 PM: We'll take our butter plaque, put it on our rolled-out dough, and do our first roll—we'll roll it out to an 8x20-inch rectangle, do a book fold, put it back on our baking sheet and refrigerate it. (Steps 6-8)

2 PM: We'll take out our dough, roll it and fold it again, this time doing a single or letter fold. (Step 9)

3 PM: We're going to roll and shape our croissants! We'll cover and proof them overnight in the fridge, and everyone can bake them on Sunday morning, whenever they get up! (Steps 10 & 11)

We should be all done by 4 PM!!

## Croissants

If you have a zip-lock bag that's about 7 inches wide, it will make it much easier to roll out your butter plaque—a slab of butter that you will enclose in your rolled-out dough before rolling, folding and rolling to create flaky layers.

### Sponge:

1/3 cup warm water

2 tsp active dry yeast (it can be regular or quick)

1/3 cup all-purpose flour

### Butter plaque:

3/4 cup butter, salted or unsalted, cold

### Dough:

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for rolling

1 Tbsp + 2 tsp sugar

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp milk, at room temperature

2 Tbsp butter, softened

### Egg wash:

1 egg

1 Tbsp milk or water

- 1) Before you start, take your butter out of the fridge! You don't want it to be too soft or too firm - ideally it should be pliable, like clay.
- 2) To make the sponge, put the warm water in a large bowl (the one you're going to mix your dough in) and sprinkle over the yeast. Let it sit for a few minutes, until it softens and dissolves—it will probably start to get foamy. Stir in the flour until it's lumpy and pasty. Cover (with plastic wrap or a plate) and let it sit for 30-45 minutes, or until it doubles in size.
- 3) Add the flour, sugar, salt, milk and butter to the sponge and mix (I use the dough hook on my stand mixer) until the dough comes together. Continue to mix with the dough hook or turn out onto the counter and knead for about 5 minutes, until the dough is smooth and elastic. Shape it into a ball, return it to the bowl (you can lightly oil the bowl first if you like, to keep the dough

from drying out), cover and let rise for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, until it has doubled in size.

- 4) While your dough is rising, you can make your butter plaque: put it into a resealable plastic bag that's about 7 inches wide and without sealing it, roll the butter with a rolling pin until it spreads into the corners and is about 5 inches in length from the bottom of the bag. Seal and pop back into the fridge.
- 5) Once your dough has doubled in size, lightly flour your countertop and roll the dough into a rectangle that's about 7 1/2 by 10 1/2 inches. It should be just over twice the size of your butter plaque. Line a baking sheet with parchment, move the dough to the baking sheet, cover with plastic and put it into the refrigerator for an hour. Take your butter plaque out of the fridge—the key is to make sure it's pliable, with a clay-like texture, so that you can roll it without it breaking. If it's too cold and brittle, it could break as you try to roll it.
- 6) Remove your dough from the fridge and put it on a lightly floured surface. Cut along the sides of the ziplock bag to open it up, peel back the plastic, flip your butter plaque onto one side of the dough, and peel off the rest of the bag. Your butter plaque should be covering half the dough. Cut it in half crosswise, so that there isn't a fold in the middle, and put the other side on top of the butter, like you're making a sandwich. Pinch around the edges to seal it in and gently roll to join the dough and butter together. You should be able to feel if the butter is soft and pliable enough to roll—if it's too cold and brittle, let it sit for 5-10 minutes. (The balance here is to make sure the butter is firm but pliable enough to roll—not so soft that it squishes out—and that the dough is cold enough that it doesn't rise too much while you're doing the lamination.)
- 7) Roll the dough out into an 8 by 20—inch rectangle. Trim the short edges—use a ruler, if you have one, to make them straight.
- 8) Fold the short edges in toward each other to meet in the middle, then close the two sides like a book. This is called a book fold. Cover with plastic and refrigerate for half an hour.
- 9) Remove the dough from the fridge and place it on the countertop, with the seams running up and down in front of you. Roll into another 8 by 20—inch rectangle, ensuring you're making the rectangle longer in the same direction—not rolling against the folds. Trim the short edges again to make them

straight, then fold the dough in thirds, as if you were folding a letter. This is called a single or letter fold. Cover and return to the fridge for 30-45 minutes.

- 10) Remove the dough from the fridge and on a lightly floured surface roll it into a 9 x 18—inch rectangle, again rolling along the seams rather than against them. (If at any point the dough becomes too tense and difficult to roll, let it relax for 20 minutes, preferably in the fridge so that the dough doesn't rise.)
- 11) Cut the dough into 7-8 triangles. At the base (wide end) of each triangle, make about a half inch slit in the middle. (For chocolate croissants, put a few chunks of dark chocolate toward the wide end of the triangle.) Starting at that end, roll them up into a croissant! Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet with the tips tucked underneath, so they don't unroll or burn in the oven. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. (You can also freeze them to bake later.)
- 12) The next morning, fill a pan with the hottest tap water you can get (not boiling) and put it on the bottom rack of your oven. Take your croissants out of the fridge, unwrap them and put the sheet on the oven rack. Close the oven door, but don't turn the oven on! Let them proof for 1 1/2-2 hours, or until they're doubled in size.
- 13) Remove them and the pan of water from the oven and preheat the oven to 425°F. In a small bowl, stir together the egg and milk to make an egg wash and gently (you don't want to deflate them!) brush over your croissants once the oven is hot and you're ready to put them in.
- 14) Bake on the middle oven rack for 15-20 minutes, until deep golden brown. Serve warm!