

COOKING SKILLS

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2

8 Chapters

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COOKING SKILLS: PASTRY 2

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Cooking Skills: Pastry 2

Chapter 1 · Choux Pastry

SKILL GOAL

Cook a paste, beat in eggs and bake it into light, hollow shells.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Choux (pronounced "shoo") is the odd one out among pastries: it is **cooked on the hob first**. Butter and water are boiled, flour is beaten in until it forms a smooth ball, and then eggs are beaten in to make a thick, glossy paste. In the oven, the water in the paste turns to steam, which blows the shells up hollow, and the egg sets the walls. The result is a crisp shell with an empty middle, perfect for filling.

There is no rubbing in, no rolling and no resting, but the paste has to be **exactly the right thickness.** Too stiff and the shells are dense; too runny and they spread flat. The test is the **"V"**: lift the beaten paste on a spoon and it should drop slowly in a thick V-shape. Eggs vary in size, so add them gradually and stop when you reach the V. Éclairs and profiteroles with chocolate are in Cooking Skills: Chocolate 2, chapter 7; here the focus is on the pastry itself. Shortcrust is in Cooking Skills: Pastry 1, chapter 1.

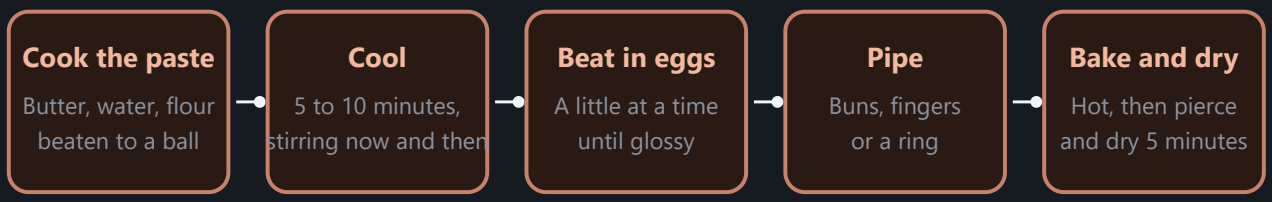


Figure 1. Choux in five steps: cook the paste, cool, beat in eggs, pipe, bake and dry.

The method

- **Melt the butter in the water** and bring it to a full boil; if the water boils away first, the paste will be too dry.
- **Tip in all the flour at once** and beat hard until the paste forms a ball and leaves the sides of the pan, about 1 minute.
- **Cool for 5 to 10 minutes,** so the eggs do not scramble, then beat them in a little at a time.
- **Stop when the paste is glossy and drops in a V** from the spoon; you may not need all the egg.
- **Bake hot without opening the oven** for the first 15 minutes, then pierce the shells and dry them for 5 more minutes.

BAKE	SHAPE	FILLING	TIME IN OVEN (APPROXIMATE)
Choux buns	Round, 5 cm	Whipped cream	25 to 30 minutes
Gougères	Round, 4 cm	None, or cheese sauce	25 minutes
Éclairs	Fingers, 12 cm	Cream, glazed	30 minutes
Choux ring	Ring of 8 balls	Cream and fruit	35 minutes

HOT PASTE, HOT OVEN AND RAW EGG

Steam from choux and hot paste: hot choux paste spits, and steam escapes fast when you open the oven or pierce a bun. Beat the hot paste with a wooden spoon, keep your face back, and use oven gloves when you open the oven door.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Raw dough and raw flour: raw flour and raw egg can carry germs, so don't taste raw pastry or filling that contains raw egg or raw meat. Wash hands, bowls and the worktop afterwards, and keep tasting for the cooked result.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Choux buns with cream

1 hour | 12 buns | making the paste and getting the V

The foundation of the whole chapter. Weigh carefully, because the proportions matter. The fillings are simple: whipped cream with a little vanilla. Beat the eggs in a jug first so you can add them gradually.

INGREDIENTS (12 BUNS)

75 g	unsalted butter, cubed
175 ml	water
1 pinch	fine salt
100 g	plain flour, sifted
3	medium eggs, beaten
200 ml	double cream
1 tsp	icing sugar, plus extra to dust
½ tsp	vanilla extract

1. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6). Boil the butter, water and salt, tip in the flour, and beat for **1 minute** over the heat until it forms a ball. Cool for 10 minutes.
2. Beat in the eggs a little at a time until the paste is glossy and drops in a V from the spoon. Spoon or pipe 12 mounds, 5 cm apart, onto lined trays.
3. Bake for **25 to 30 minutes** until golden and light. Pierce each with a skewer to let steam out, return to the oven for 5 minutes, then cool. Whip the cream with the sugar and vanilla, split the buns and fill.

> HOT PASTE, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS
>
> **Steam from choux and hot paste:** hot choux paste spits, and steam escapes fast when you open the oven or pierce a bun. Beat the hot paste with a wooden spoon, keep your face back, and use oven gloves when you open the oven door.
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things

on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Allergens: contains gluten, egg and milk.

LEVEL 2 · SAVOURY

Cheese gougères

45 minutes | 20 gougères | adding cheese to the paste

Gougères are savoury choux puffs with cheese beaten into the paste, eaten warm as a snack. Use a strong cheese and keep the paste a little stiffer, since cheese adds moisture. They freeze well before or after baking.

INGREDIENTS (20 GOUGÈRES)

75 g	unsalted butter
175 ml	water
1 pinch	fine salt
100 g	plain flour
3	medium eggs, beaten
75 g	mature Cheddar or Gruyère, finely grated
½ tsp	English mustard powder

1. Make the paste as in the choux buns and cool for 10 minutes. Beat in the eggs gradually until the paste is glossy and holds a V.
2. Beat in the cheese and mustard powder. Pipe or spoon 20 mounds, 4 cm across, onto lined trays.
3. Bake at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for **22 to 25 minutes** until deep golden and light. Serve warm.

HOT PASTE, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Steam from choux and hot paste: hot choux paste spits, and steam escapes fast when you open the oven or pierce a bun. Beat the hot paste with a wooden spoon, keep your face back, and use oven gloves when you open the oven door.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

> **Allergens:** contains gluten, egg, milk and mustard.

LEVEL 2 · FINGERS

Éclairs with a simple glaze

1 hour 15 minutes | 10 éclairs | piping a shape and filling it

Pipe the paste into 12 cm fingers with a plain nozzle, using a fork to mark the pipe lines on the parchment first. Éclairs need slightly longer baking than buns to dry out. Fill, then dip in a glaze: a plain icing here, chocolate in Cooking Skills: Chocolate 2, chapter 7.

INGREDIENTS (10 ÉCLAIRS)

75 g	unsalted butter
175 ml	water
1 pinch	fine salt
100 g	plain flour
3	medium eggs, beaten
250 ml	double cream, whipped with vanilla
100 g	icing sugar
2 tbsp	water, to mix the glaze

1. Make the paste as before and pipe 10 fingers, 12 cm long and 5 cm apart, onto lined trays.
2. Bake at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for **30 to 35 minutes** until deep golden and hollow. Pierce the ends and dry for 5 minutes, then cool completely.
3. Fill with the cream (pipe it in through a hole at each end or split them), then dip the tops in a glaze of icing sugar and water, thick enough to coat a spoon.

> **HOT OVEN, STEAM AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Steam from choux and hot paste:** hot choux paste spits, and steam escapes fast when you open the oven or pierce a bun. Beat the hot paste with a wooden spoon, keep your face back, and use oven gloves when you open the oven door.
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

> **Allergens:** contains gluten, egg and milk.

LEVEL 3 · SHOWPIECE

A choux ring with cream and fruit

1 hour 15 minutes | 8 portions | shaping a ring and filling it neatly

A circle of piped choux balls that bake together into a crown. Draw a 20 cm circle on the parchment as a guide. Fill with whipped cream and strawberries, and dust with icing sugar just before serving.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

75 g	unsalted butter
175 ml	water
1 pinch	fine salt
100 g	plain flour
3	medium eggs, beaten
2 tbsp	flaked almonds
300 ml	double cream, whipped
300 g	strawberries, sliced
1 tbsp	icing sugar

1. Make the paste. Pipe 8 balls just touching in a ring on lined parchment and scatter with the almonds.
2. Bake at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for **30 to 35 minutes** until deep golden. Pierce, dry for 5 minutes, and cool on a rack.
3. Slice across the ring horizontally with a serrated knife, fill the base with cream and strawberries, replace the top and dust with icing sugar.

> **HOT OVEN, NUTS AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Steam from choux and hot paste:** hot choux paste spits, and steam escapes fast when you open the oven or pierce a bun. Beat the hot paste with a wooden spoon, keep your face back, and use oven gloves when you open the oven door.
>
> **Nuts:** Bakewell tart contains almonds, a tree nut. Say so clearly when serving, keep it away from anyone with a nut allergy, and check jam and almond extract labels.

> **Allergens:** contains gluten, egg, milk and almonds.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Eggs all at once or gradually

Consistency.

1. Make two small batches, adding the egg all at once in one and gradually in the other, aiming for the V.

Look for: Adding it all at once often makes the paste too runny. Gradual addition lets you stop at the V.

EXPERIMENT

Oven opened early or kept shut

Collapse.

1. Bake two trays, opening the oven door at 10 minutes for one and not at all for the other.

Look for: The opened tray collapses and goes flat; the shut one stays tall. Don't open the door in the first 15 minutes.

EXPERIMENT

Piped or spooned

Shape.

1. Pipe half a tray and spoon the other half.

Look for: Piped shells are neat and even; spooned ones are rougher but rise just as well.

EXPERIMENT

Plain or cheese

Gougères.

1. Divide a batch, beating cheese into one half only.

Look for: The cheese version browns faster and is crispier outside and softer in; the plain one is lighter and more hollow.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Choux buns				
Cheese gougères				
Éclairs				
Choux ring				
Eggs all at once or gradually				
Oven opened early or kept shut				
Piped or spooned				
Plain or cheese				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Shells collapse	Underbaked or oven opened early	Bake until deep golden; keep the oven shut; dry them out
Flat, spread shells	Paste too wet	Add less egg; cook the paste dry enough first

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Dense, small shells	Paste too stiff	Beat in a little more egg until it drops in a V
Soggy shells	Not dried or filled too early	Pierce and dry them; fill just before serving
Lumpy paste	Flour added too slowly	Add all the flour at once and beat hard
Scrambled paste	Eggs added while hot	Cool the paste for 10 minutes first

HOT OVEN, HOT PASTE AND LEFTOVERS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Steam from choux and hot paste: hot choux paste spits, and steam escapes fast when you open the oven or pierce a bun. Beat the hot paste with a wooden spoon, keep your face back, and use oven gloves when you open the oven door.

Keeping and freezing: raw pastry keeps in the fridge for about 2 days wrapped tightly, and freezes for about 3 months (general guidance). Cooked pies and tarts keep for about 2 days chilled; reheat pies until steaming hot all the way through, and freeze cooked pies for no more than about 2 to 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can cook the paste to a ball.
- ☐ I can beat in eggs to the right V.
- ☐ I can pipe even shapes.
- ☐ I know to keep the oven shut and to dry the shells.
- ☐ I can fill choux just before serving.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2, chapter 2 is Filo Pastry: handling paper-thin sheets without drying them out.

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2

Chapter 2 · Filo Pastry

SKILL GOAL

Handle paper-thin filo without it drying out, and build crisp layers with butter.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Filo (Greek for leaf) is a dough stretched until it is paper-thin and dried into sheets. Making it at home takes skill and a long table, so everyone buys it: look for it in the freezer aisle and thaw it overnight in the fridge. The pastry crisps because each thin sheet is brushed with fat, and the sheets bake into brittle, crackling layers with air between them. It has no raising agent of its own and no fat in the dough, so the fat you brush between layers is what makes it flaky.

The enemy is **drying out.** Filo dries in minutes in the open air, then cracks and crumbles when you try to fold it. Keep the stack covered with cling film and a barely damp tea towel, and take out only the sheets you are using. Cracked sheets are not a disaster: patch them with an extra layer. For shortcrust see Cooking Skills: Pastry 1, chapter 1; puff pastry is in chapters 3 and 4 of this course.



Figure 2. Filo works in five steps: thaw, cover, brush, fill and fold, then bake.

The method

- **Thaw filo in the fridge overnight,** never in the microwave, then bring it to room temperature for 30 minutes before unrolling.
- **Keep it covered** with cling film and a barely damp tea towel while you work.
- **Brush each sheet lightly** with melted butter (or oil), from the edges inward, using a soft brush.
- **Layer, fill and fold quickly,** and brush the top once more before baking.
- **Bake at 180 to 190°C** until deep golden; pale filo is soft and papery.

BAKE	LAYERS	FILLING	OVEN (APPROXIMATE)
Spinach and feta triangles	3 per strip	Spinach, feta	190°C, 20 minutes
Cheese rolls	1 sheet, rolled	Feta, mozzarella, mint	190°C, 20 minutes
Apple strudel	6 sheets, rolled	Apples, raisins	190°C, 35 minutes
Baklava-style pastries	8 sheets, cut	Nuts and spice, syrup	180°C, 40 minutes

DRY FILO, HOT OVEN, HOT SYRUP AND ALLERGENS

Dry filo: filo dries out and cracks in minutes. Keep the sheets you are not using under cling film and a barely damp tea towel, work quickly, and brush each sheet with melted butter or oil as you go.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Spinach and feta triangles

45 minutes | 12 triangles | folding a triangle like a flag

The classic filo starter, and a good way to practise handling the sheets. Squeeze the spinach very dry. Cut the sheets into strips, brush, fill, and fold like a flag so each triangle is neatly sealed.

INGREDIENTS (12 TRIANGLES)

200 g	frozen spinach, defrosted and squeezed very dry
150 g	feta, crumbled
1	egg, beaten
1 pinch	nutmeg
6	sheets of filo
50 g	unsalted butter, melted

1. Mix the spinach, feta, half the beaten egg and nutmeg. Heat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan, gas 5). Lay out 1 sheet, brush with butter, add a second, and cut lengthways into 4 strips; repeat with all sheets to make 12 strips of 2 layers.
2. Put a heaped teaspoon of filling at one end of a strip, fold the corner over to form a triangle, and keep folding like a flag to the end. Brush with butter, tucking the end under.
3. Place on a lined tray, brush with the remaining egg and bake for **18 to 20 minutes** until golden.

DRY FILO, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Dry filo: filo dries out and cracks in minutes. Keep the sheets you are not using under cling film and a barely damp tea towel, work quickly, and brush each sheet with melted butter or oil as you go.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

> **Allergens:** contains gluten, milk, egg and butter.

LEVEL 2 · ROLLS

Savoury cheese rolls

35 minutes | 8 rolls | rolling a cigar

Thin cigars of filo filled with feta, mozzarella, egg and mint. Roll them loosely and tuck the ends in so the filling stays inside. They are best eaten the day they are made.

INGREDIENTS (8 ROLLS)

150 g	feta, crumbled
100 g	grated mozzarella
1	egg, beaten
2 tbsp	chopped fresh mint
4	sheets of filo
40 g	unsalted butter, melted

1. Mix the cheeses, half the egg and the mint. Heat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan, gas 5). Brush a sheet with butter and cut it in half to make 2 rectangles.
2. Spoon a line of filling along the short edge, fold in the sides and roll up into a cigar. Brush the end with butter. Repeat to make 8.
3. Place seam side down on a lined tray, brush with egg and butter and bake for **18 to 20 minutes** until golden.

> **DRY FILO AND HOT OVEN**
>
> **Dry filo:** filo dries out and cracks in minutes. Keep the sheets you are not using under cling film and a barely damp tea towel, work quickly, and brush each sheet with melted butter or oil as you go.
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.
>
> **Allergens:** contains gluten, milk and egg.

LEVEL 2 · SWEET ROLL

Apple strudel

1 hour 10 minutes | 8 slices | rolling a large filo log

Fried breadcrumbs are scattered under the apples to soak up the juice and stop the layers going soggy. Roll with the help of the tea towel or the parchment under the filo.

INGREDIENTS (8 SLICES)

6	sheets of filo
75 g	unsalted butter, melted
3 tbsp	fresh breadcrumbs
500 g	cooking apples, peeled and thinly sliced
50 g	caster sugar
50 g	raisins
1 tsp	ground cinnamon
1	lemon, juiced

1. Heat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan, gas 5). Fry the breadcrumbs in 1 tablespoon of the butter until golden. Toss the apples with the sugar, raisins, cinnamon and lemon juice.
2. Layer 6 buttered sheets on parchment, scatter the breadcrumbs over the bottom third, add the apples, fold in the sides and roll up using the parchment to help.
3. Place seam side down on a tray, brush with butter and bake for **35 to 40 minutes** until deep golden. Cool for 15 minutes before slicing.

DRY FILO, HOT FRUIT AND ALLERGENS

Dry filo: filo dries out and cracks in minutes. Keep the sheets you are not using under cling film and a barely damp tea towel, work quickly, and brush each sheet with melted butter or oil as you go.

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Allergens: contains gluten, milk and butter.

LEVEL 3 · SYRUP

Baklava-style nut pastries

1 hour plus cooling | 16 pieces | layering many sheets and pouring syrup on hot pastry

A tray of buttered filo layered with spiced nuts, cut before baking so the syrup soaks through. Pour the cool syrup over the hot pastry, so it sizzles and soaks in without making the filo soggy.

INGREDIENTS (16 PIECES)

8	sheets of filo
100 g	unsalted butter, melted
200 g	walnuts and pistachios, finely chopped
1 tsp	ground cinnamon
150 g	caster sugar
150 ml	water
2 tbsp	honey
1 tbsp	lemon juice

1. Make the syrup first: boil the sugar, water, honey and lemon juice for 8 minutes, then cool. Mix the nuts with the cinnamon.
2. Butter a 20 cm square tin. Layer 4 sheets, each buttered, scatter half the nuts, add 2 sheets, the rest of the nuts, then 2 more sheets, brushing butter between each and on top. Cut into diamonds with a sharp knife, right through.
3. Bake at 180°C (160°C fan, gas 4) for **35 to 40 minutes** until deep golden. Pour the cooled syrup over the hot pastry and leave for several hours.

HOT SYRUP, NUTS AND HOT OVEN

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Nuts: Bakewell tart contains almonds, a tree nut. Say so clearly when serving, keep it away from anyone with a nut allergy, and check jam and almond extract labels.

> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.
>
> **Dry filo:** filo dries out and cracks in minutes. Keep the sheets you are not using under cling film and a barely damp tea towel, work quickly, and brush each sheet with melted butter or oil as you go.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Butter or oil between sheets

Flavour and crisp.

1. Make two small stacks, brushing one with melted butter and the other with olive oil, and bake.

Look for: Butter gives richer flavour and browns more; oil gives a lighter, crisper layer. Use either; a mix works well.

EXPERIMENT

Damp cloth or none

Drying.

1. Leave a stack of filo uncovered on the worktop for 5 minutes while keeping another under a damp cloth.

Look for: The uncovered sheets dry, crack and crumble. The covered ones stay supple.

EXPERIMENT

Number of layers

Crispness.

1. Bake a triangle of 2 layers and one of 4 layers.

Look for: More layers give a thicker crunch but may be doughy inside; 2 or 3 gives a delicate shell.

EXPERIMENT

180°C or 200°C

Browning.

1. Bake two trays of filo triangles at 180°C and 200°C for the same time.

Look for: At 200°C filo can burn on the edges; at 180°C it browns evenly. Watch the oven.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Spinach and feta triangles				
Cheese rolls				
Apple strudel				
Baklava-style pastries				
Butter or oil between sheets				
Damp cloth or none				
Number of layers				
180°C or 200°C				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Filo cracks	Dried out or too cold	Cover it; thaw fully; patch with extra layers
Filo sticks together	Defrosted too fast or wet	Thaw slowly in the fridge; separate gently
Pale and soft	Too little butter or oven too cool	Brush more and bake hotter
Soggy base	Wet filling	Squeeze greens dry; use breadcrumbs under fruit
Filling leaks	Overfilled or poorly sealed	Use less filling; brush the end with butter and tuck under
Burnt edges	Oven too hot	Lower the heat or cover with foil

HOT OVEN, HOT SYRUP AND LEFTOVERS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Keeping and freezing: raw pastry keeps in the fridge for about 2 days wrapped tightly, and freezes for about 3 months (general guidance). Cooked pies and tarts keep for about 2 days chilled; reheat pies until steaming hot all the way through, and freeze cooked pies for no more than about 2 to 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can thaw and cover filo so it stays supple.

☐ I can brush sheets evenly with butter.

☐ I can fold a triangle and roll a cigar.

☐ I can roll a strudel.

☐ I can layer and syrup a baklava-style tray.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2, chapter 3 is Rough Puff Pastry: folding butter into dough for quick layers.

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2

Chapter 3 · Rough Puff Pastry

SKILL GOAL

Fold butter into dough in a few turns to make flaky pastry in about an hour.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Rough puff gets its layers the same way as proper puff, but in a quicker, rougher way. Instead of wrapping a block of butter in dough, you leave **lumps of butter** in the flour, add water, and roll and fold the dough several times. Each roll squashes the butter lumps into flat sheets between thin layers of dough. In the oven, the water in the butter turns to steam and lifts the layers apart into flaky leaves.

The rule is **keep it cold.** If the butter melts into the dough, the layers vanish and you get a dense, greasy pastry. Chill between turns, work fast, and use a hot oven. It is a middle path between shortcrust (Cooking Skills: Pastry 1, chapter 1) and full puff (chapter 4 here), and perfect for pies, Eccles cakes and anything where you want flake without a day of work. Ready-made puff is in Cooking Skills: Pastry 1, chapter 6.



Figure 3. Rough puff in four turns: roll and fold, chill, repeat.

The method

- **Cut cold butter into 2 cm cubes** and stir them into the flour without breaking them down.

- **Add ice-cold water** until the dough just clumps; it will look lumpy and ragged, which is right.
- **Roll into a rectangle about three times as long as it is wide,** fold in three like a letter, and turn a quarter turn.
- **Repeat four times,** chilling for 20 minutes after every second turn, or whenever the butter softens.
- **Rest for 30 minutes,** then roll, cut and bake at 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7), the hotter oven helping the rise.

PASTRY	BUTTER	TURNS	TIME (APPROXIMATE)
Shortcrust	Rubbed in	None	15 minutes
Rough puff	Lumps left in	4	1 hour (with chilling)
Ready-made puff	Laminated by a factory	None	10 minutes
Full puff	A single block, locked in	6	3 to 4 hours

RAW DOUGH, HOT OVEN AND RAW CHICKEN

Raw dough and raw flour: raw flour and raw egg can carry germs, so don't taste raw pastry or filling that contains raw egg or raw meat. Wash hands, bowls and the worktop afterwards, and keep tasting for the cooked result.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Raw chicken and meat: keep raw meat on its own board and plate, wash hands, knives and boards in hot soapy water afterwards, and cook meat fillings right through (no pink, juices running clear) before they go under a pastry lid.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Rough puff dough

1 hour 15 minutes with chilling | 1 batch (about 500 g) | rolling and folding with lumpy butter

Make the dough once, wrap it well and use it for all the recipes in this chapter. Don't worry that it looks messy at first: after two turns the lumps flatten into streaks and after four it is smooth.

INGREDIENTS (1 BATCH)

250 g	plain flour, plus extra for rolling
1 pinch	fine salt
200 g	cold unsalted butter, cut into 2 cm cubes
125 ml	ice-cold water, plus a little more if needed
1 tsp	lemon juice

1. Stir the flour and salt, then toss the butter cubes in so they are coated. Add the lemon juice and water and mix with a knife until it comes together in a ragged dough with visible butter lumps.
2. Roll into a rectangle about 20 x 50 cm, fold in thirds like a letter, turn a quarter turn, roll again and fold. Wrap and chill for **20 minutes.**
3. Do 2 more turns, chill for 20 minutes, then use or freeze. The dough keeps 2 days in the fridge.

> **RAW DOUGH AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Raw dough and raw flour:** raw flour and raw egg can carry germs, so don't taste raw pastry or filling that contains raw egg or raw meat. Wash hands, bowls and the worktop afterwards, and keep tasting for the cooked result.
>
> **Allergens:** pastry contains gluten (flour) and milk (butter); egg washes contain egg. Use a plant block fat for a dairy-free version, and note that gluten-free flour needs a different method.

LEVEL 2 · SWEET

Eccles cakes

45 minutes plus the dough | 8 cakes | wrapping a filling in rough puff

Currants, sugar, butter and spice wrapped in flaky pastry, flattened and scored. Press the cakes firmly so the filling is almost visible through the pastry. Serve with a slice of cheese.

INGREDIENTS (8 CAKES)

½	batch of rough puff dough (above)
100 g	currants
25 g	unsalted butter, melted
25 g	light brown sugar
½ tsp	mixed spice
1	orange or lemon, zest only
1	egg white, lightly beaten
1 tbsp	caster sugar

1. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Mix the currants, butter, brown sugar, spice and zest. Roll the pastry to 3 mm and cut 8 rounds of 10 cm.
2. Put a heaped tablespoon of filling on each, gather the edges to the centre, pinch to seal, flip over and press flat with the rolling pin until the currants show through.
3. Score 3 lines on top, brush with egg white and sprinkle with sugar. Bake for **15 to 20 minutes** until deep golden. Cool on a rack.

HOT OVEN, HOT FILLING AND ALLERGENS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

> **Allergens:** contains gluten, milk and egg.

LEVEL 2 · SAVOURY

Vol-au-vent cases with a chicken filling

1 hour plus the dough | 8 vol-au-vents | cutting a case that rises tall

A round case with a hollow middle. Cut two rounds, cut a hole out of one to make a ring and stick it on top of the other. Press the cutter straight down; twisting it seals the edges and the pastry will not rise. Fill after baking.

INGREDIENTS (8 VOL-AU-VENTS)

½	batch of rough puff dough (above)
1	egg, beaten
1 tbsp	butter
150 g	mushrooms, finely chopped
200 g	cooked chicken, diced
1 tbsp	plain flour
150 ml	low-salt chicken stock
3 tbsp	double cream
1 tsp	chopped thyme

1. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Roll the pastry to 5 mm, cut 8 rounds of 7 cm and 8 rings by cutting a 4 cm hole in 8 more rounds. Brush the base round with egg and press the ring on top; brush the top only.
2. Bake on a lined tray for **15 to 18 minutes** until tall and golden. Press down the middle gently if it has risen.
3. For the filling, fry the mushrooms in the butter, add the flour and stock to make a thick sauce, then the chicken, cream and thyme. Spoon into the warm cases.

> **HOT OVEN, COOKED CHICKEN AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.
>
> **Raw chicken and meat:** keep raw meat on its own board and plate, wash hands, knives and

boards in hot soapy water afterwards, and cook meat fillings right through (no pink, juices running clear) before they go under a pastry lid.

Allergens: contains gluten, milk, egg and cream; stock may contain celery.

LEVEL 3 · PIE

A rough puff pie lid

1 hour 15 minutes plus the dough | 4 portions | topping a pie with flaky pastry

Rough puff makes a lid that rises, flakes and crisps. Use it on the chicken and mushroom filling from Cooking Skills: Pastry 1, chapter 4. The lid should be 5 mm thick and the filling completely cold.

INGREDIENTS (4 PORTIONS)

½	batch of rough puff dough (above)
1	cooled chicken and mushroom pie filling (Pastry 1, chapter 4)
1	egg, beaten
1 tbsp	plain flour, for rolling

1. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Fill a 20 cm pie dish with the cold filling and a pie funnel in the middle.
2. Roll the dough 5 mm thick, cut a strip for the rim, wet the rim, and lay the lid over. Press, trim, cut a vent and brush the top (not the cut edge) with egg.
3. Bake for **25 to 30 minutes** until the lid has risen and is deep golden, lowering the oven to 190°C (170°C fan, gas 5) after 15 minutes if it darkens too fast.

HOT OVEN, STEAM AND ALLERGENS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Steam from a hot pie: a pie keeps hot steam and boiling filling inside the crust. Rest it for 10 minutes before cutting, cut from the side with the pie held steady, and keep your face back when you break the lid.

Allergens: contains gluten, milk and egg.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Butter cubes large or small

Layers.

1. Make two small batches, one with 2 cm butter cubes and one with the butter rubbed in to pea size.

Look for: Larger lumps give more distinct flaky layers; smaller ones give a shorter, more crumbly texture. 2 cm is a good size.

EXPERIMENT

Number of turns

Rise.

1. Bake pastry rolled after 2 turns and after 4 turns.

Look for: Two turns gives a rustic, uneven flake; four turns gives a taller, more even rise. More than six gets hard to manage.

EXPERIMENT

Chilled or not

Butter melting.

1. Roll and cut half the dough straight away and chill the other half for 30 minutes before cutting.

Look for: The chilled dough rises evenly; the warm dough shrinks and leaks butter.

EXPERIMENT

Sharp or blunt cutter

Edges.

1. Cut vol-au-vents with a sharp cutter pressed straight down and a blunt cutter twisted.

Look for: The sharp, straight cut rises tall. The twisted one seals the layers and rises crooked.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Rough puff dough				
Eccles cakes				
Vol-au-vents				
Rough puff pie lid				
Butter cubes large or small				
Number of turns				
Chilled or not				
Sharp or blunt cutter				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Butter leaks out	Oven too cool or dough warm	Chill before baking; bake at 220°C
Pastry didn't rise	Butter melted into dough, or edges sealed	Keep cold, cut cleanly and press straight down
Tough pastry	Too much water or overworked	Use less water; roll gently

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Uneven rise	Butter lumps uneven	Mix gently and fold carefully
Doughy inside	Underbaked	Bake until deep golden; lower the heat later
Dough cracks when rolling	Too cold or dry	Let it stand for 5 minutes

HOT OVEN, RAW DOUGH AND LEFTOVERS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Raw dough and raw flour: raw flour and raw egg can carry germs, so don't taste raw pastry or filling that contains raw egg or raw meat. Wash hands, bowls and the worktop afterwards, and keep tasting for the cooked result.

Keeping and freezing: raw pastry keeps in the fridge for about 2 days wrapped tightly, and freezes for about 3 months (general guidance). Cooked pies and tarts keep for about 2 days chilled; reheat pies until steaming hot all the way through, and freeze cooked pies for no more than about 2 to 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can leave butter in lumps in the dough.
- ☐ I can roll and fold a letter turn.
- ☐ I know to chill between turns.
- ☐ I can cut cleanly so the pastry rises.
- ☐ I can use rough puff for pastries and pies.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2, chapter 4 is Full Puff Pastry: classic lamination with a butter block locked in dough.

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2

Chapter 4 · Full Puff Pastry

SKILL GOAL

Lock a butter block inside dough and fold it into hundreds of layers for the highest-rising pastry.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Full puff (also called classic or French puff) is the pastry from which ready-made puff is made. A plain dough, the **détrempe** (day-trom-pay), is rolled out and a flat block of butter is wrapped inside, like a parcel. Each time you roll it out and fold it, you multiply the layers: after **six simple turns** there are about 700 sheets of butter, thinner than paper, between 700 sheets of dough. In the oven the butter's water turns to steam and the layers puff up to several times their height.

It is not hard, but it is slow and fussy, and **temperature is everything.** The butter must be cold but flexible, about as stiff as the dough. If it is too cold it shatters; too warm and it smears into the dough. Plan three to four hours, much of it chilling, and do it on a cool day. Rough puff in chapter 3 is the quicker version; for hand pies and quick puff recipes see Cooking Skills: Pastry 1, chapters 6 and 7.



Figure 4. Full puff: dough, lock the butter, then six turns with chilling between.

The method

- **Make the dough and chill it** for 30 minutes; pat the butter into a flat square and chill it too, so both are the same stiffness.
- **Wrap the butter inside the dough** like an envelope and seal the edges so none escapes.
- **Roll into a long rectangle, fold in three,** turn a quarter turn and chill for 30 minutes; this is two turns.
- **Repeat** until you have done six turns, always chilling in between.
- **Rest for 30 minutes before cutting,** cut with a very sharp knife and bake hot at 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7).

PASTRY	LAYERS	TIME	BEST FOR
Rough puff	About 100	1 hour	Pies, Eccles cakes, sausage rolls
Full puff	About 700	3 to 4 hours	Mille-feuille, cream horns, vol-au-vents
Ready-made puff	Hundreds	None	Everyday quick bakes
Shortcrust	None	30 minutes	Tarts and pies

RAW DOUGH, HOT OVEN AND HOT JAM

Raw dough and raw flour: raw flour and raw egg can carry germs, so don't taste raw pastry or filling that contains raw egg or raw meat. Wash hands, bowls and the worktop afterwards, and keep tasting for the cooked result.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Full puff pastry dough

3 hours with chilling | 1 batch (about 650 g) | locking in a butter block and making six turns

Take it slowly and use a ruler for the dimensions. Pat the butter into a square with a rolling pin between two sheets of parchment so it is the same thickness all over. Don't be tempted to skip the chilling.

INGREDIENTS (1 BATCH)

250 g	strong white bread flour, plus extra for rolling
1 pinch	fine salt
25 g	cold unsalted butter, cubed
125 ml	ice-cold water
1 tsp	lemon juice
200 g	cold unsalted butter, in one block

1. Rub the 25 g butter into the flour and salt, add the water and lemon juice, and knead briefly to a smooth dough. Wrap and chill for **30 minutes.** Beat the 200 g butter between parchment into a 15 cm square and chill.
2. Roll the dough into a 25 cm square, put the butter block on it like a diamond, fold the corners in to meet in the middle, and pinch the seams shut. Roll to 40 x 15 cm and fold in three (turn 1), turn, roll and fold (turn 2). Chill for 30 minutes.
3. Do 4 more turns in 2 sessions of 2, chilling for **30 minutes** after each pair. Wrap and chill for 1 hour before using. Keep 2 days in the fridge, or freeze.

RAW DOUGH, COLD BUTTER AND ALLERGENS

Raw dough and raw flour: raw flour and raw egg can carry germs, so don't taste raw pastry or filling that contains raw egg or raw meat. Wash hands, bowls and the worktop afterwards, and keep tasting for the cooked result.

Cold and warm kitchens: pastry hates heat. If the kitchen is hot, chill the bowl, the flour and the butter, work quickly, and put the dough back in the fridge whenever it turns soft and sticky.

> **Allergens:** pastry contains gluten (flour) and milk (butter); egg washes contain egg. Use a plant block fat for a dairy-free version, and note that gluten-free flour needs a different method.

LEVEL 2 · LAYERS

Mille-feuille

1 hour 15 minutes plus the dough | 6 portions | baking flat, even puff and layering

Mille-feuille means a thousand leaves. Bake thin puff pastry pressed flat under a tray, so it stays crisp and even, then layer with cream and jam. Slice with a serrated knife using a sawing motion, not pressing down.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

½	batch of full puff dough (above)
300 ml	double cream
1 tsp	vanilla extract
2 tbsp	icing sugar, plus 100 g for icing
4 tbsp	raspberry jam
2 tbsp	water

1. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Roll the dough to 3 mm, cut into 3 rectangles of about 10 x 25 cm, prick with a fork, and place on a lined tray. Cover with parchment and another tray to keep them flat and bake for **20 minutes.**
2. Remove the top tray and parchment, dust with icing sugar and bake for 5 minutes until caramelised; cool completely. Whip the cream with the 2 tbsp icing sugar and vanilla.
3. Layer: pastry, jam, cream, pastry, jam, cream, pastry. Mix the 100 g icing sugar with the water, spread over the top, and chill for 30 minutes before slicing.

> **HOT OVEN, HOT TRAYS AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.
>
> **Allergens:** contains gluten, milk and cream.

LEVEL 2 · ROLLED

Cream horns

1 hour plus the dough | 8 horns | rolling pastry around a mould

Strips of puff pastry wound round cone moulds, baked and filled with jam and cream. You can make moulds from card shaped into cones and covered in foil. Overlap the strips by a third, and keep the end tucked underneath.

INGREDIENTS (8 HORNS)

½	batch of full puff dough (above)
1	egg, beaten
2 tbsp	caster sugar
4 tbsp	raspberry jam
200 ml	double cream, whipped

1. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Roll the dough to 3 mm and cut into 8 strips of 2 cm wide and 40 cm long.
2. Wind each strip around a greased cone mould from the tip upward, overlapping by a third, with the end tucked underneath. Brush with egg and sprinkle with sugar.
3. Bake on a lined tray for **15 to 18 minutes** until deep golden. Slip off the moulds when cool and fill with jam and whipped cream.

> **HOT OVEN AND HOT MOULDS**
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.
>
> **Allergens:** contains gluten, milk and egg.

LEVEL 3 · TART

A tart with a puff rim

1 hour 15 minutes plus the dough | 6 portions | raising a border that stays tall

A flat puff base with a raised rim made by an upper frame: the rim puffs up and holds the filling. Cut the frame with a sharp knife, brush the top of it only, and don't let egg drip down the sides.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

½	batch of full puff dough (above)
1	egg, beaten
3 tbsp	apricot jam
400 g	ripe plums or berries, sliced
2 tbsp	caster sugar

1. Heat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7). Roll the dough 3 mm thick into a 20 x 30 cm rectangle on parchment. Cut a 2 cm strip from each edge and glue it back on top of the edges with a little water to make a frame; prick the middle.
2. Brush only the top of the frame with egg. Spread the jam in the middle, arrange the fruit and sprinkle with sugar.
3. Bake on a hot tray for **25 to 30 minutes** until the rim is tall and golden. Cool for 10 minutes before cutting.

> **HOT OVEN, HOT FRUIT AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.
>
> **Hot syrup and sugar:** syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.
>
> **Allergens:** contains gluten, milk and egg.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Butter temperature

Cold but flexible.

1. Make a small batch with butter chilled until hard and another with butter left out for 10 minutes, and roll both.

Look for: The hard butter shatters into chips; the soft butter smears into the dough. Butter should bend without cracking.

EXPERIMENT

Number of turns

Layers.

1. Bake pastry rolled after 4 turns and after 6.

Look for: Six turns gives a taller, more even rise. Four is good enough for tarts; more than six starts to merge.

EXPERIMENT

Rested or not

Shrinkage.

1. Cut and bake pastry straight after the last turn and after a 30-minute rest.

Look for: The rested pastry shrinks less; the unrested one springs back and curls.

EXPERIMENT

Bake high or low

Rise.

1. Bake two pastry squares at 180°C and 220°C.

Look for: At 220°C the pastry puffs high and dries quickly; at 180°C it bakes pale and denser.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Full puff dough				
Mille-feuille				
Cream horns				
Puff rim tart				
Butter temperature				
Number of turns				
Rested or not				
Bake high or low				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Butter leaks out	Oven too cool, dough warm, or seam open	Chill before baking; bake at 220°C; seal the seam
Pastry doesn't rise	Butter melted into dough or edges sealed	Chill more; cut cleanly and press straight down
Dough tears when rolling	Butter too cold or dough too dry	Let it stand for 10 minutes

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Uneven layers	Butter block uneven	Beat the butter to an even thickness
Soggy mille-feuille	Assembled too early	Fill within an hour of serving
Shrinks in the oven	Not rested	Rest for 30 minutes before cutting

HOT OVEN, RAW DOUGH AND LEFTOVERS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Raw dough and raw flour: raw flour and raw egg can carry germs, so don't taste raw pastry or filling that contains raw egg or raw meat. Wash hands, bowls and the worktop afterwards, and keep tasting for the cooked result.

Keeping and freezing: raw pastry keeps in the fridge for about 2 days wrapped tightly, and freezes for about 3 months (general guidance). Cooked pies and tarts keep for about 2 days chilled; reheat pies until steaming hot all the way through, and freeze cooked pies for no more than about 2 to 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can lock a butter block in dough.
- ☐ I can roll and fold six turns, chilling between.
- ☐ I know how cold the butter should be.
- ☐ I can bake flat puff for layered pastries.
- ☐ I can build a mille-feuille.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2, chapter 5 is Croissants and Danish Pastries: laminating a yeast dough and proving it.

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2

Chapter 5 · Croissants and Danish Pastries

SKILL GOAL

Laminate a yeast dough with butter, shape it, prove it and bake it into flaky pastries.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

A croissant is a **yeast dough laminated with butter.** It is made from bread dough (see Cooking Skills: Bread 1, chapter 1) wrapped around a block of butter, then rolled and folded three times, as in puff pastry. After proving, the layers of dough and butter puff in the oven, and the yeast gives a soft, airy crumb as well as flaky layers. It is the most time-consuming recipe in this course, and the most rewarding.

Temperature is everything. The dough and butter must be the same stiffness when rolled, and the dough must prove in a cool room (about 24 to 26°C): warmer and the butter melts out. Quick croissants and folded breads are in Cooking Skills: Bread 2, chapter 6; here you make the real thing. Full puff, which uses the same turns, is in chapter 4. Plan two days: dough and chilling on day one, shaping, proving and baking on day two.



Figure 5. Laminated yeast pastry: dough, lock the butter, three turns, shape, prove, bake.

The method

- **Make the dough the day before** and chill it overnight, so it relaxes and the yeast works slowly.
- **Beat the cold butter into a flat square** between parchment and chill; it should bend without cracking.
- **Lock the butter into the dough,** roll into a long rectangle and fold in three; chill 30 minutes between each of three turns.
- **Roll to 4 mm,** cut and shape, then prove for about 2 hours in a cool room until puffy and wobbly.
- **Brush with egg wash and bake** at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for 15 to 18 minutes until deep golden.

PASTRY	SHAPE	FILLING	BAKE (APPROXIMATE)
Croissant	Rolled triangle	None	200°C, 15 to 18 minutes
Pain au chocolat	Rolled rectangle	Two chocolate batons	200°C, 15 to 18 minutes
Danish pastry	Folded square	Custard and fruit	200°C, 15 minutes
Cinnamon knot	Strips, tied	Cinnamon sugar	200°C, 15 minutes

WARM ROOMS, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Yeast dough and warm rooms: yeast dough proves best at 24 to 26°C. In a warmer place the butter melts out of the layers. Prove in a cool room, not on top of a radiator or in a hot oven, and cover the dough so a skin does not form.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Allergens: pastry contains gluten (flour) and milk (butter); egg washes contain egg. Use a plant block fat for a dairy-free version, and note that gluten-free flour needs a different method.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Croissants (and the laminated dough)

Two days: 40 minutes work on day one, 2 hours 45 minutes on day two | 12 croissants | laminating a yeast dough

Make the dough and laminate it as below. The recipe makes enough dough for 12 croissants; you will use half of it for the pains au chocolat, Danish pastries and cinnamon knots below, so for those make the dough once and divide it.

INGREDIENTS (12 CROISSANTS)

500 g	strong white bread flour, plus extra for rolling
60 g	caster sugar
10 g	fine salt
7 g	fast-action dried yeast
150 ml	lukewarm milk
150 ml	cold water
40 g	soft unsalted butter
250 g	cold unsalted butter, for the block
1	egg, beaten with 1 tbsp milk, to glaze

1. Day one: mix the flour, sugar, salt and yeast, add the milk, water and soft butter and knead for 8 minutes into a smooth dough. Shape into a rectangle, wrap and chill overnight. Beat the cold butter into a 15 x 20 cm rectangle between parchment and chill.
2. Day two: roll the dough to 20 x 40 cm, put the butter on one half, fold the other half over and pinch the edges. Roll to 20 x 60 cm, fold in thirds (turn 1), chill 30 minutes, then repeat for turns 2 and 3 with 30 minutes of chilling between.
3. Roll to 4 mm and cut triangles of 10 cm base and 25 cm height. Roll up from the base, curve into crescents, place on lined trays and prove for **2 hours** in a cool room. Glaze and bake at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for 15 to 18 minutes.

> **WARM ROOMS, RAW EGG WASH AND ALLERGENS**

Yeast dough and warm rooms: yeast dough proves best at 24 to 26°C. In a warmer place the butter melts out of the layers. Prove in a cool room, not on top of a radiator or in a hot oven, and cover the dough so a skin does not form.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Allergens: pastry contains gluten (flour) and milk (butter); egg washes contain egg. Use a plant block fat for a dairy-free version, and note that gluten-free flour needs a different method.

LEVEL 2 · CHOCOLATE

Pains au chocolat

2 hours 45 minutes plus the dough | 6 pastries | rolling a filling inside layered dough

Rectangles of croissant dough rolled around two batons of dark chocolate. If you cannot buy batons, break up bars of good dark chocolate into strips. Roll them loosely so there is room for the layers to rise.

INGREDIENTS (6 PASTRIES)

½	batch of laminated croissant dough (above), after 3 turns
12	dark chocolate batons or strips (about 60 g)
1	egg, beaten with 1 tbsp milk, to glaze

1. Roll the dough to 4 mm and cut 6 rectangles of 10 x 14 cm. Put a chocolate baton across the short edge of each, roll once, add a second baton and roll up, seam side down.
2. Place on lined trays and prove for **2 hours** in a cool room until puffy and wobbly.
3. Glaze and bake at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for 15 to 18 minutes until deep golden. The chocolate is hot: let them cool for 10 minutes.

HOT CHOCOLATE, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Yeast dough and warm rooms: yeast dough proves best at 24 to 26°C. In a warmer place the butter melts out of the layers. Prove in a cool room, not on top of a radiator or in a hot oven, and cover the dough so a skin does not form.

Allergens: contains gluten, milk, egg and soy (chocolate).

LEVEL 2 · FRUIT

Danish pastries with custard and fruit

2 hours 45 minutes plus the dough | 8 pastries | folding and filling a laminated square

Danish pastry is the same sort of dough, shaped as squares with the corners folded to the middle. Pipe a spoonful of custard in the centre and top with fruit. Use custard from Cooking Skills: Eggs 2, chapter 2, or a ready-made one, which must be thick.

INGREDIENTS (8 PASTRIES)

½	batch of laminated croissant dough (above), after 3 turns
8 tbsp	thick custard, cooled
8	tinned apricot halves, drained, or a few berries
1	egg, beaten with 1 tbsp milk, to glaze
3 tbsp	apricot jam, warmed, to glaze

1. Roll the dough to 4 mm and cut 8 squares of 10 cm. Fold each corner into the centre (pinwheel) and press down, or leave flat with a raised border.
2. Place on lined trays, prove for **2 hours,** then press the centre down gently and fill with custard and fruit.
3. Glaze the edges with egg and bake at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for 15 minutes. Brush the warm pastries with warmed apricot jam.

HOT JAM, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Yeast dough and warm rooms: yeast dough proves best at 24 to 26°C. In a warmer place the butter melts out of the layers. Prove in a cool room, not on top of a radiator or in a hot oven, and cover the dough so a skin does not form.

Allergens: contains gluten, milk and egg.

LEVEL 3 · TWISTED

Cinnamon knots

2 hours 40 minutes plus the dough | 8 knots | shaping laminated strips

Strips of laminated dough spread with cinnamon sugar and tied into knots. The shaping is easy but the layers show best if you cut with a very sharp knife straight down.

INGREDIENTS (8 KNOTS)

½	batch of laminated croissant dough (above), after 3 turns
2 tbsp	soft unsalted butter
3 tbsp	light brown sugar
2 tsp	ground cinnamon
1	egg, beaten with 1 tbsp milk, to glaze

1. Roll the dough to a 20 x 30 cm rectangle. Spread the butter, then the sugar and cinnamon. Fold in half lengthways and cut into 8 strips about 3 cm wide.
2. Twist each strip and tie into a loose knot, tucking the ends underneath. Prove on lined trays for **2 hours.**
3. Glaze and bake at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for 15 minutes until deep golden. Cool for 10 minutes; the sugar is very hot.

HOT SUGAR, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Yeast dough and warm rooms: yeast dough proves best at 24 to 26°C. In a warmer place the butter melts out of the layers. Prove in a cool room, not on top of a radiator or in a hot oven, and cover the dough so a skin does not form.

Allergens: contains gluten, milk and egg.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Proving warm or cool

Butter melting.

1. Prove one tray in a cool room at 24°C and one next to a warm oven for the same time.

Look for: The cool tray puffs and keeps its layers; the warm tray leaks butter and bakes flat and greasy.

EXPERIMENT

Butter thick or thin

Layers.

1. Make two croissants, one with the butter block folded in thickly and one rolled very thin.

Look for: Thick butter makes bigger gaps and a flakier, greasier croissant; thin butter gives tight layers and a drier one.

EXPERIMENT

Shaping tight or loose

Rise.

1. Roll one croissant tightly and one loosely.

Look for: The loose roll rises taller with a visible spiral; the tight one is dense.

EXPERIMENT

Egg wash

Colour.

1. Glaze one croissant with egg and milk and leave another unglazed.

Look for: The glazed one is deep golden and glossy; the unglazed one is paler and matt.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Croissants				
Pains au chocolat				
Danish pastries				
Cinnamon knots				
Proving warm or cool				
Butter thick or thin				
Shaping tight or loose				
Egg wash				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Butter leaks out	Proved too warm	Prove at 24°C; chill the shaped pastry for 15 minutes first
Dense, bready croissants	Layers merged or under-proved	Chill between turns; prove until wobbly

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Raw in the middle	Under-baked or oven too hot outside	Bake until deep golden, lower the heat after 10 minutes
Butter streaks, no layers	Butter too cold and shattered	Let the butter soften slightly before locking it in
Pastries open up	Rolled loosely with no seam tuck	Tuck the end underneath and place seam down
Too sweet or flat	Too much sugar or salt too low	Check measurements

HOT OVEN, HOT FILLINGS AND LEFTOVERS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Keeping and freezing: raw pastry keeps in the fridge for about 2 days wrapped tightly, and freezes for about 3 months (general guidance). Cooked pies and tarts keep for about 2 days chilled; reheat pies until steaming hot all the way through, and freeze cooked pies for no more than about 2 to 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make a yeast dough and chill it overnight.
- ☐ I can lock in a butter block and make three turns.
- ☐ I can shape a croissant and a Danish.
- ☐ I can prove in a cool room.
- ☐ I can fix butter that leaks.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2, chapter 6 is Hot-Water Crust and Raised Pies: building a free-standing pie with a firm crust.

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2

Chapter 6 · Hot-Water Crust and Raised Pies

SKILL GOAL

Make a firm pastry from hot fat and water, and raise it into a free-standing pie.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Hot-water crust is the traditional pastry for pork pies, game pies and Scottish pies. Fat and water are boiled together and poured onto flour, which makes a warm, pliable dough that is **moulded while still warm.** As it cools, it sets firm, strong enough to stand without a tin and to hold a heavy meat filling. It is not light and flaky like shortcrust; it is crisp, sturdy and delicious, and eaten cold or at room temperature.

The skill is working fast: the dough sets hard as it cools, so keep it covered in a warm place, and mould it before it stiffens. The filling is packed tightly and cooked inside the crust. Because the pie bakes and then cools, the meat shrinks away from the crust, so a **stock jelly** is poured through a hole in the lid to fill the gap, keeping it moist and holding the meat in place. Shortcrust pies are in Cooking Skills: Pastry 1, chapter 4.



Figure 6. A raised pie: hot crust, raise, fill, bake and add the jelly.

The method

- **Boil the fat and water** together, pour onto the flour at once and mix to a soft dough.

- **Keep the dough warm** under a bowl or cloth; cold dough will not mould and cracks.
- **Raise the case** by pressing dough over the base of a jar, or lining a tin; keep the walls even, about 4 mm thick.
- **Pack the filling firmly,** put on the lid, crimp and cut a hole for steam.
- **Bake until cooked through** (75°C in the centre for meat), cool, then pour in the jelly and chill.

PASTRY	FAT	TEXTURE	BEST FOR
Shortcrust	Rubbed in cold	Short, crumbly	Tarts, pies in dishes
Rough puff	Folded in lumps	Flaky	Pie lids, pastries
Hot-water crust	Melted with water	Firm, crisp, sturdy	Pork pies, raised pies
Suet pastry	Shredded suet	Soft, spongy	Steamed puddings, dumplings

HOT FAT, RAW PORK AND JELLY

Steam from choux and hot paste: hot choux paste spits, and steam escapes fast when you open the oven or pierce a bun. Beat the hot paste with a wooden spoon, keep your face back, and use oven gloves when you open the oven door.

Raw pork and cooking through: pork must be cooked right through to 75°C in the centre (general guidance), with no pink and clear juices. Keep raw meat on its own board and plate, wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water, and chill cooked pies promptly.

Jelly and chilled pies: pies with jelly must be chilled below 5°C and eaten within about 2 days. Do not leave them at room temperature for more than about 2 hours. Gelatine is made from animal bones; use agar or leave the jelly out for a vegetarian version.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Hot-water crust dough

30 minutes | 1 batch (enough for 8 small pies) | mixing and working a warm dough

Make this dough first and work quickly while it is warm. Boil the fat and water until the fat has fully melted, then pour it onto the flour all at once. Knead it briefly until smooth. If it cools and cracks, warm it in the microwave for 10 seconds.

INGREDIENTS (1 BATCH)

300 g	plain flour
1 tsp	fine salt
100 g	lard
125 ml	water
1	egg, beaten (for glazing)

1. Mix the flour and salt in a bowl and make a well in the centre. Boil the lard and water in a small pan until the lard has melted and the water is bubbling.
2. Pour the hot liquid into the flour at once, stir with a wooden spoon until it forms a ball, then knead for **1 minute** until smooth.
3. Keep the dough covered in a warm bowl and use it within 15 minutes, while it is still warm and pliable.

HOT FAT, RAW EGG AND ALLERGENS

Steam from choux and hot paste: hot choux paste spits, and steam escapes fast when you open the oven or pierce a bun. Beat the hot paste with a wooden spoon, keep your face back, and use oven gloves when you open the oven door.

Raw dough and raw flour: raw flour and raw egg can carry germs, so don't taste raw pastry or filling that contains raw egg or raw meat. Wash hands, bowls and the worktop afterwards, and keep tasting for the cooked result.

Allergens: pastry contains gluten (flour) and milk (butter); egg washes contain egg. Use a plant block fat for a dairy-free version, and note that gluten-free flour needs a different method.

LEVEL 2 · SMALL

Small pork pies

1 hour 30 minutes plus chilling | 8 small pies | raising small pies in a tin

Small pork pies are made in a muffin tin to hold the shape. Use fatty cuts of pork, and season generously, because cold meat tastes blander than hot. Cook right through. Eat cold with mustard and pickle.

INGREDIENTS (8 SMALL PIES)

1	batch of hot-water crust dough (above)
350 g	pork shoulder, finely chopped
100 g	unsmoked bacon, finely chopped
1 tsp	chopped fresh sage
½ tsp	ground black pepper
1 pinch	nutmeg
1 tsp	fine salt
1	egg, beaten
200 ml	hot low-salt chicken stock
1 tsp	powdered gelatine

1. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6). Roll two thirds of the dough and cut 8 circles to line the tin; use the rest for lids. Mix the pork, bacon, sage, pepper, nutmeg and salt.
2. Line the muffin tin holes with the pastry, pack the filling firmly, brush the edges with egg, add the lids, crimp, and cut a hole in the top of each. Glaze with egg.
3. Bake for **20 minutes,** then at 180°C (160°C fan, gas 4) for 25 to 30 minutes until the centre reaches 75°C. Dissolve the gelatine in the hot stock, cool slightly, pour through the holes, and chill for 4 hours.

RAW PORK, HOT OVEN AND JELLY

Raw pork and cooking through: pork must be cooked right through to 75°C in the centre (general guidance), with no pink and clear juices. Keep raw meat on its own board and plate, wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water, and chill cooked pies promptly.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Jelly and chilled pies: pies with jelly must be chilled below 5°C and eaten within about 2 days. Do not leave them at room temperature for more than about 2 hours. Gelatine is made from animal bones; use agar or leave the jelly out for a vegetarian version.

LEVEL 2 · LARGE

A chicken and ham raised pie

2 hours 30 minutes plus chilling | 8 portions | raising a large pie in a tin

A large pie in a loose-bottomed cake tin. Line the tin with two thirds of the pastry and keep the lid for last. Pack the chicken and ham in layers, and add a layer of chopped herbs for flavour. Cook right through; a thermometer takes the guesswork out.

INGREDIENTS (8 PORTIONS)

1.5	batches of hot-water crust dough (above)
500 g	chicken thighs, boneless, chopped
200 g	cooked ham, chopped
2 tbsp	chopped parsley
1 tsp	chopped fresh sage
1	egg, beaten
300 ml	hot low-salt chicken stock
2 tsp	powdered gelatine

1. Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6). Line a 20 cm tin with two thirds of the dough, pressing it up the sides, and pack in the chicken, ham and herbs in layers; season.
2. Brush the edge with egg, add the lid, crimp, cut a steam hole and glaze. Bake for 30 minutes, then at 180°C (160°C fan, gas 4) for **1 hour 15 minutes** until the filling is 75°C in the centre.
3. Cool, then dissolve the gelatine in the hot stock and pour it in through the hole. Chill for at least 6 hours before cutting.

> **RAW CHICKEN, HOT OVEN AND JELLY**
>
> **Raw chicken and meat:** keep raw meat on its own board and plate, wash hands, knives and boards in hot soapy water afterwards, and cook meat fillings right through (no pink, juices running clear) before they go under a pastry lid.
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven

gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Jelly and chilled pies: pies with jelly must be chilled below 5°C and eaten within about 2 days. Do not leave them at room temperature for more than about 2 hours. Gelatine is made from animal bones; use agar or leave the jelly out for a vegetarian version.

LEVEL 3 · VEGETARIAN

A vegetable raised pie

2 hours plus chilling | 6 portions | a raised pie with no meat and no jelly

Roasted leeks, mushrooms and Cheddar bind with an egg inside the crust, so no jelly is needed. The filling must be dry: roast the vegetables first so they do not soak the pastry. Eat warm or cold.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

1.5	batches of hot-water crust dough, made with vegetable fat instead of lard
3	leeks, sliced
300 g	mushrooms, sliced
2 tbsp	olive oil
150 g	mature Cheddar, grated
2	eggs, beaten
1 tsp	fresh thyme leaves

1. Roast the leeks and mushrooms with the oil at 220°C (200°C fan, gas 7) for 20 minutes until dry and golden. Cool and mix with the cheese, 1 egg and thyme.
2. Line a 20 cm tin with two thirds of the dough, pack in the filling, brush with the other egg, add the lid, crimp and cut a steam hole.
3. Bake at 200°C (180°C fan, gas 6) for 30 minutes, then at 180°C (160°C fan, gas 4) for **35 to 40 minutes** until golden. Cool for 20 minutes before cutting.

HOT OVEN, RAW EGG AND ALLERGENS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Allergens: pastry contains gluten (flour) and milk (butter); egg washes contain egg. Use a plant block fat for a dairy-free version, and note that gluten-free flour needs a different method.

> **Allergens:** contains gluten, milk and egg.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Warm or cold dough

Working it.

1. Mould one pie with warm dough and another after the dough has cooled for 15 minutes.

Look for: The warm dough moulds smoothly; the cold dough cracks and tears. Work while warm.

EXPERIMENT

Hot-water crust against shortcrust

Strength.

1. Make one small pie in each pastry and pick both up.

Look for: The hot-water crust stays rigid; the shortcrust crumbles. Hot-water crust is made for sturdy, heavy fillings.

EXPERIMENT

Free-standing or in a tin

Shape.

1. Bake one pie in a tin and one moulded round a jar without a tin.

Look for: The tin holds a neat shape and is easier; the free-standing pie bows out and needs a collar of foil.

EXPERIMENT

Jelly or not

Gaps.

1. Cut a pie with jelly and one without, after chilling both.

Look for: The jelly fills the gap between meat and crust, keeping the meat moist; without it there is a dry space.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Hot-water crust dough				
Small pork pies				
Chicken and ham raised pie				
Vegetable raised pie				
Warm or cold dough				
Hot-water crust against shortcrust				
Free-standing or in a tin				
Jelly or not				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Dough cracks as you mould it	Gone cold	Warm it for 10 seconds in a microwave, or cover and rest in a warm place
Pie collapses	Walls too thin or no support	Make walls 4 mm thick; bake in a tin or with a foil collar

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Soggy base	Wet filling	Pack the filling firmly and bake on a hot tray
Meat shrinks from crust	Normal	Pour in the jelly after baking
Raw filling	Pie not cooked long enough	Cook until the centre reaches 75°C
Jelly leaks	Poured into a hot pie, or crust cracked	Cool the pie first and seal the cracks with dough

HOT OVEN, RAW MEAT AND CHILLED PIES

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Raw pork and cooking through: pork must be cooked right through to 75°C in the centre (general guidance), with no pink and clear juices. Keep raw meat on its own board and plate, wash hands, boards and knives in hot soapy water, and chill cooked pies promptly.

Jelly and chilled pies: pies with jelly must be chilled below 5°C and eaten within about 2 days. Do not leave them at room temperature for more than about 2 hours. Gelatine is made from animal bones; use agar or leave the jelly out for a vegetarian version.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can make hot-water crust and work it while warm.
- ☐ I can raise a small pie in a tin.
- ☐ I can pack and seal a filling.
- ☐ I can check a raised pie is cooked through.
- ☐ I can add a jelly and chill the pie safely.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2, chapter 7 is Suet Pastry and Puddings: steaming and baking with suet crust.

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2

Chapter 7 · Suet Pastry and Puddings

SKILL GOAL

Make a soft, light suet crust and cook it by simmering, steaming or baking.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

Suet pastry is a British speciality: self-raising flour mixed with **shredded suet** (the hard fat from around beef kidneys, or a vegetable version) and a little water. The suet melts slowly, creating a soft, light and spongy crust rather than a crisp one. It is made for steaming and boiling, as in a steamed pudding or on top of a stew as dumplings, though it also bakes well in a roll. It is simple to mix: no rubbing in, no resting.

It rises thanks to the raising agent in self-raising flour, so it needs **room to expand**: wrap steamed puddings loosely, with a pleat in the paper and foil. Handle it lightly and cook it soon after mixing. A long, gentle steam gives the softest result. Pastries made with crisp fat are covered in Cooking Skills: Pastry 1, chapter 1, and a beef stew to go under dumplings in Cooking Skills: Beef and Steak 1, chapter 5.



Figure 7. Suet pastry in five steps: mix, shape, wrap, cook and serve.

The method

- **Mix the flour, suet and salt,** then add cold water a little at a time to make a soft, slightly sticky dough.
- **Handle lightly and briefly,** shaping on a floured surface; overworking toughens it.
- **Wrap loosely** in a pleated sheet of parchment and foil, so the pastry can swell.
- **Cook gently:** steam or simmer without letting the water boil dry, or bake at 190°C (170°C fan, gas 5).
- **Rest for 5 minutes,** then turn out and serve straight away, because suet pastry stiffens as it cools.

DISH	COOKING METHOD	TIME (APPROXIMATE)	SERVE WITH
Suet dumplings	Simmered in stew	25 minutes	Beef stew
Jam roly-poly	Baked or steamed	40 minutes baked	Custard
Steak and mushroom pudding	Steamed	2 hours after the filling	Mash and greens
Cheese and onion roll	Baked	45 minutes	Gravy or salad

STEAM, HOT WATER AND RAW MEAT

Steaming safely: a steamer or pan of boiling water gives off scalding steam. Check the water level every 30 minutes, top it up with boiling water from the kettle, lift the lid away from your face and use oven gloves to lift a hot basin.

Raw chicken and meat: keep raw meat on its own board and plate, wash hands, knives and boards in hot soapy water afterwards, and cook meat fillings right through (no pink, juices running clear) before they go under a pastry lid.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

Suet dumplings

35 minutes | 8 dumplings | mixing the dough and simmering on a stew

Plain dumplings dropped onto a bubbling stew or soup. Simmer with the lid on for 15 minutes, then without for 10. They should swell into soft clouds. Add herbs or a little cheese to the dough for flavour.

INGREDIENTS (8 DUMPLINGS)

150 g	self-raising flour
75 g	shredded suet (beef or vegetable)
1 pinch	fine salt
1 tbsp	chopped parsley (optional)
5 tbsp	cold water
1	pan of simmering beef stew or soup

1. Mix the flour, suet, salt and parsley. Add the water a little at a time until you have a soft, slightly sticky dough.
2. With floured hands, shape into 8 balls the size of a large walnut.
3. Drop onto a simmering stew, cover and cook for **15 minutes,** then uncover and cook for 10 minutes more. Serve at once.

> **HOT STEW, STEAM AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot pot and hot steam:** a heavy casserole dish or pan of hot liquid is heavy and scalding. Use oven gloves, lift the lid away from your face so the steam doesn't burn you, keep the handles turned in and never carry a full pot across a busy kitchen.
>
> **Allergens:** contains gluten; beef suet is an animal fat (use vegetable suet for vegetarians).

LEVEL 2 · SWEET

Jam roly-poly

1 hour | 6 portions | rolling and baking a suet pudding

A nursery classic: a sheet of suet pastry spread with jam, rolled up and baked. Leave a 2 cm border so the jam doesn't escape, and wrap it loosely in foil with room to rise. Serve with custard (see Cooking Skills: Eggs 2, chapter 2).

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

225 g	self-raising flour
110 g	shredded suet
1 pinch	fine salt
150 ml	cold water, approximately
6 tbsp	strawberry or raspberry jam
1	egg or milk, to glaze

1. Heat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan, gas 5). Mix the flour, suet and salt, add the water and bring together to a soft dough. Roll out to a 25 x 30 cm rectangle.
2. Spread the jam over, leaving a 2 cm border, brush the border with water, roll up from the short edge, and pinch the ends.
3. Wrap loosely in a pleated sheet of baking parchment and foil, place on a tray and bake for **40 minutes.** Unwrap for the last 10 minutes to brown. Rest for 5 minutes and slice.

HOT JAM, HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS

Hot syrup and sugar: syrup and jam fillings become hotter than boiling water and stick to skin. Let a tart cool for 15 minutes before cutting, and take care with hot jam when eating tarts straight from the tin.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Allergens: contains gluten and egg if glazed.

LEVEL 2 · SAVOURY

A cheese and onion suet roll

1 hour | 6 portions | a savoury rolled pudding

The savoury cousin of the roly-poly: suet pastry rolled around cheese, onion and sage and baked until golden. Slice and serve hot with a gravy or a green salad.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

225 g	self-raising flour
110 g	shredded suet
1 pinch	fine salt
150 ml	cold water
150 g	mature Cheddar, grated
1	onion, finely chopped and softened in butter
1 tsp	chopped fresh sage

1. Heat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan, gas 5). Make the dough and roll to 25 x 30 cm.
2. Scatter with the cheese, cooled onion and sage, leaving a 2 cm border. Brush the border with water and roll up from the short edge.
3. Wrap loosely in a pleated sheet of parchment and foil, bake for **40 minutes,** unwrap, and bake for 10 minutes more. Rest for 5 minutes before slicing.

> **HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.
>
> **Allergens:** contains gluten and milk; suet is an animal fat.

LEVEL 3 · STEAMED

A steak and mushroom pudding

3 hours 30 minutes | 6 portions | lining a basin and steaming

The grand finale: a deep basin lined with suet pastry, filled with a thick beef filling, capped with a lid and steamed for two hours. Cook the filling first so the meat is tender and the gravy thick. Check the water often.

INGREDIENTS (6 PORTIONS)

1.5	batches of suet pastry (see the roly-poly recipe)
600 g	stewing steak, in 3 cm cubes
200 g	mushrooms, quartered
1	onion, chopped
2 tbsp	plain flour
400 ml	hot low-salt beef stock
1 tbsp	Worcestershire sauce
1 tbsp	butter, for the basin

1. Brown the beef and onion, stir in the flour, add the stock, Worcestershire sauce and mushrooms, and simmer for **1 hour 30 minutes** until tender and thick. Cool completely.
2. Butter a 1.2 litre basin. Roll two thirds of the pastry into a circle, line the basin, add the filling, wet the edge, add the lid, pinch and trim. Cover with pleated parchment and foil, tied with string.
3. Steam over simmering water, with the lid on, for **2 hours,** topping up with boiling water. Rest for 10 minutes, run a knife around the edge, and turn out.

> **STEAM, HOT BASIN AND RAW MEAT**
>
> **Steaming safely:** a steamer or pan of boiling water gives off scalding steam. Check the water level every 30 minutes, top it up with boiling water from the kettle, lift the lid away from your face and use oven gloves to lift a hot basin.
>
> **Raw chicken and meat:** keep raw meat on its own board and plate, wash hands, knives and

boards in hot soapy water afterwards, and cook meat fillings right through (no pink, juices running clear) before they go under a pastry lid.

Allergens: contains gluten, fish (Worcestershire sauce), and celery in stock.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

Suet or butter

Texture.

1. Make two small dumpling batches, one with suet and one with cold grated butter, and simmer them.

Look for: The suet gives a softer, lighter, more sponge-like dumpling; the butter ones are denser. Suet gives the classic texture.

EXPERIMENT

Steamed or baked

Crust.

1. Cook one jam roly-poly wrapped in foil and steamed, and another baked unwrapped.

Look for: The steamed one is soft and pale; the baked one has a golden, slightly crisp crust. Both are traditional.

EXPERIMENT

Dough wet or dry

Softness.

1. Make a dry and a wet dough and cook each as dumplings.

Look for: The wet dough gives lighter but more fragile dumplings; the dry one is firmer and heavier. Aim for soft and slightly sticky.

EXPERIMENT

Boiling fast or at a simmer

Toughness.

1. Cook two dumplings, one in a gently bubbling stew and one in fast-boiling liquid.

Look for: Fast boiling breaks them up and makes them heavy; a gentle simmer keeps them whole and light.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Suet dumplings				
Jam roly-poly				
Cheese and onion roll				
Steak and mushroom pudding				
Suet or butter				
Steamed or baked				
Dough wet or dry				
Boiling fast or at a simmer				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Heavy, doughy dumplings	Overworked or boiled fast	Handle lightly; simmer gently with the lid on first
Pudding collapses when turned out	Underbaked or wrong rest	Steam the full time; rest 10 minutes before turning out

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Water runs into the pudding	Cover not sealed	Use a pleat in parchment and foil, tied tight with string
Filling leaks	Edge not sealed	Wet the edge and pinch firmly
Roly-poly splits	Rolled too tight or too dry	Roll gently and leave room for expansion
Pan boils dry	Water not topped up	Check every 30 minutes and add boiling water

STEAM, HOT PANS AND LEFTOVERS

Steaming safely: a steamer or pan of boiling water gives off scalding steam. Check the water level every 30 minutes, top it up with boiling water from the kettle, lift the lid away from your face and use oven gloves to lift a hot basin.

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Keeping and freezing: raw pastry keeps in the fridge for about 2 days wrapped tightly, and freezes for about 3 months (general guidance). Cooked pies and tarts keep for about 2 days chilled; reheat pies until steaming hot all the way through, and freeze cooked pies for no more than about 2 to 3 months.

CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

- ☐ I can mix suet pastry without overworking it.
- ☐ I can wrap a pudding with room to rise.
- ☐ I can simmer dumplings gently.
- ☐ I can steam a pudding safely.
- ☐ I can turn out a pudding.

NEXT CHAPTER

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2, chapter 8 is A Pastry Showpiece: planning and assembling a pastry table.

Cooking Skills: Pastry 2

Chapter 8 · A Pastry Showpiece

SKILL GOAL

Plan, time and serve a pastry table for a crowd, using the skills from both courses.

Shopping list for this chapter

The basics

The last skill in pastry is not a pastry at all but a **plan.** Almost every pastry here can be made in advance and finished at the last minute: dough in the fridge or freezer, shells baked and filled just before serving, pies baked a day ahead and chilled. A table of three or four savoury pastries and three or four sweet ones looks generous and is much less work than it seems, because most of the labour is in the days before.

Three rules help. **Work backwards** from the time guests arrive. **Do the cold, wet jobs early** (doughs, jellies, creams) and the **crisp jobs late** (filling choux, warming filo). And **choose contrast**: something flaky, something crisp, something soft, something cold, something warm. See the earlier chapters of this course for each recipe, Cooking Skills: Pastry 1, chapter 8 for freezing and planning, and Cooking Skills: Sauces 2, chapter 6 for a chutney to go with the savouries.



Figure 8. A pastry table is planned backwards from the moment the guests arrive.

The method

- **Write the menu and count portions:** about 3 to 4 savoury and 2 to 3 sweet bites per person.
- **List every task with its time and fridge/freezer needs,** then work backwards from serving time.
- **Bake in the order the oven allows:** hot-oven pastries first, lower-temperature bakes after.
- **Fill and glaze at the last minute,** so choux stays crisp and mille-feuille doesn't go soft.
- **Label each plate** with its name and main allergens (gluten, egg, milk, nuts, sesame).

ITEM	MAKE AHEAD?	FINISH	SERVE
Gougères	Bake a day ahead	Re-crisp 5 minutes	Warm
Filo triangles	Freeze unbaked	Bake from frozen	Warm
Small pork pies	Bake a day ahead	Jelly set	Cold
Éclairs and choux tower	Shells a day ahead	Fill within 2 hours	Cold
Mille-feuille	Pastry a day ahead	Assemble within 1 hour	Cold

HOT OVEN, CARAMEL AND KEEPING FOOD SAFE

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Hot caramel: caramel reaches about 170°C and sticks to skin, causing deep burns. Use a heavy pan, long tongs for dipping, never touch it, and keep a bowl of cold water nearby to plunge any splash on skin at once. Soak the pan in hot water to clean it.

Keeping and freezing: raw pastry keeps in the fridge for about 2 days wrapped tightly, and freezes for about 3 months (general guidance). Cooked pies and tarts keep for about 2 days chilled; reheat pies until steaming hot all the way through, and freeze cooked pies for no more than about 2 to 3 months.

Try it

LEVEL 1 · START HERE

A savoury buffet for 12

Spread over 2 days | 12 portions | planning a savoury table

Three savoury pastries from this course, each made in a batch, with chutney and a salad. Use the recipes in the earlier chapters; this one is the plan. Make the pies and shells the day before, and warm everything for the table.

INGREDIENTS (12 PORTIONS)

1	batch of cheese gougères (chapter 1)
2	batches of spinach and feta triangles (chapter 2)
1	batch of small pork pies (chapter 6)
1	jar of chutney (Sauces 2, chapter 6)
200 g	mixed salad leaves
6 tbsp	vinaigrette
2 tbsp	English mustard

1. Two days before: make the pie crusts, bake and chill the pork pies with their jelly. The day before: bake the gougères and freeze the filo triangles unbaked.
2. On the day: bake the filo triangles from frozen for **20 to 25 minutes,** and re-crisp the gougères for 5 minutes at 180°C (160°C fan, gas 4). Take the pork pies out of the fridge 20 minutes before serving.
3. Arrange the warm and cold items on boards with the chutney, mustard and salad, and label each one.

HOT OVEN, CHILLED PIES AND ALLERGENS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Jelly and chilled pies: pies with jelly must be chilled below 5°C and eaten within about 2 days. Do not leave them at room temperature for more than about 2 hours. Gelatine is made from animal bones; use agar or leave the jelly out for a vegetarian version.

Allergens: contains gluten, milk, egg, pork and mustard.

LEVEL 2 · SWEET

A sweet tea table for 12

Spread over 2 days | 12 portions | planning a sweet table

Éclairs, Eccles cakes and a mille-feuille, served with tea and coffee. The pastry for the mille-feuille and the choux shells are made the day before; the filling happens in the last hour.

INGREDIENTS (12 PORTIONS)

1	batch of éclairs (chapter 1)
1	batch of Eccles cakes (chapter 3)
1	mille-feuille (chapter 4)
500 ml	double cream, whipped
300 g	strawberries
1 tbsp	icing sugar

1. The day before: bake the choux shells and the mille-feuille pastry sheets, bake the Eccles cakes, and store the shells and sheets in airtight tins.
2. On the day: re-crisp the shells for 5 minutes at 180°C (160°C fan, gas 4). Whip the cream and fill the éclairs and mille-feuille within **1 hour** of serving.
3. Slice the strawberries, dust with icing sugar, and keep the finished pastries chilled until serving.

HOT OVEN, CREAM AND ALLERGENS

Hot oven and hot trays: ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.

Keeping and freezing: raw pastry keeps in the fridge for about 2 days wrapped tightly, and freezes for about 3 months (general guidance). Cooked pies and tarts keep for about 2 days chilled; reheat pies until steaming hot all the way through, and freeze cooked pies for no more than about 2 to 3 months.

Allergens: contains gluten, milk and egg.

LEVEL 3 · TOWER

A choux tower

2 hours plus the choux | 12 portions | building with caramel

A cone of filled choux buns held together with caramel, like a small croquembouche. Make 30 small shells (2.5 cm) from two batches of choux paste; they bake in about 20 minutes. Use a conical template of card to build.

INGREDIENTS (12 PORTIONS)

30	small choux shells (chapter 1), baked and cooled
400 ml	double cream, whipped with vanilla
150 g	caster sugar
50 ml	water

1. Pipe the cream into each shell through a small hole in the base. Make a cone of card on a plate.
2. Make the caramel: dissolve the sugar in the water over a low heat, boil without stirring for **5 to 8 minutes** until golden amber. Take it off the heat and dip the base of each bun, then stick it to the next.
3. Build from the bottom upward, spiralling in. Serve within 2 hours of assembly. Spin spare caramel into threads if you like.

> **HOT CARAMEL AND ALLERGENS**
>
> **Hot caramel:** caramel reaches about 170°C and sticks to skin, causing deep burns. Use a heavy pan, long tongs for dipping, never touch it, and keep a bowl of cold water nearby to plunge any splash on skin at once. Soak the pan in hot water to clean it.
>
> **Allergens:** contains gluten, milk and egg.

LEVEL 3 · SIGNATURE

Your signature pastry

Your choice | your choice | designing a pastry from your favourite methods

Combine two methods you have learned: choux with a savoury filling, filo with a sweet one, puff with a surprise. Write the recipe as you make it, and make it twice. A signature bake is one you can repeat and be known for.

INGREDIENTS (YOUR CHOICE)

1	pastry from this course (choux, filo, rough puff, full puff, laminated or raised)
1	filling from your own ideas
1	finish: glaze, dust or sauce
1	notebook and pen

1. Choose a pastry and write down your filling and finish before you start.
2. Make it, noting times and temperatures, and what you would change.
3. Make it again with your changes. Write the final recipe on a card and share it.

> HOT OVEN AND ALLERGENS
>
> **Hot oven and hot trays:** ovens, trays and tins are hot enough to burn badly. Use dry oven gloves (a damp cloth conducts heat), pull the shelf out a little before lifting a tray, put hot things on a heatproof surface and keep children away from the oven door.
>
> **Allergens:** label every allergen, especially nuts, egg, milk and gluten.

Experiments

EXPERIMENT

A timed pastry session

Planning.

1. Make a mille-feuille from start to finish with a timer, and note each stage.

Look for: You will see how much time is spent chilling and how much is active. Plan other jobs for the chilling windows.

EXPERIMENT

Swap one bake

Flexibility.

1. Replace one item on the plan with another from the course, such as sausage rolls for pork pies.

Look for: A good plan has swappable parts. Note which swaps work.

EXPERIMENT

Your own table

Design.

1. Plan a table for 8 using three pastries from the course and write out the timeline.

Look for: The best tables balance flaky, crisp, soft, cold and warm. Check that your plan does.

EXPERIMENT

Freezing and reheating

Make ahead.

1. Freeze a filo triangle, a gougère and a baked tart case, then bake or reheat each.

Look for: Unbaked filo and gougères freeze well; fully filled choux do not. Frozen cases re-crisp in the oven.

Tasting notes

WHAT I TRIED	METHOD OR AMOUNT	WHAT I SAW	WHAT I THOUGHT	WILL I DO IT AGAIN?
Savoury buffet				
Sweet tea table				
Choux tower				
Signature pastry				
A timed pastry session				
Swap one bake				
Your own table				
Freezing and reheating				

Troubleshooting

PROBLEM	LIKELY CAUSE	WHAT TO DO
Choux soggy before serving	Filled too early	Fill within 1 to 2 hours of serving; re-crisp the shells first
Mille-feuille soft	Assembled too early	Assemble within 1 hour of serving
Too much to do at once	Poor timeline	Write the plan backwards and prep earlier
Caramel hardens too fast	Too cool	Re-warm gently for a few seconds
Pies warm and soft	Not chilled	Chill for 6 hours and serve cold
Missing allergen labels	Forgotten	Label every dish when you put it out

HOT OVEN, HOT CARAMEL AND LEFTOVERS

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CHECKPOINT: CAN YOU DO THIS NOW?

☐ I can plan a table backwards from serving time.

☐ I can make pastry components ahead.

☐ I can fill and finish at the last minute.

☐ I can label allergens.

☐ I have a signature bake.

NEXT CHAPTER

Congratulations: you have finished Cooking Skills: Pastry 2. You now have the main pastries of the kitchen: shortcrust, choux, filo, puff, laminated and raised.