

 3 hours
PREP TIME 40 mins
BAKE TIME 20
SERVINGS 20 mins
COOK TIME 4 hours
TOTAL TIME

CROQUEMBOUCHE

CRÈME PÂTISSIÈRE

- 4 cups (32 floz/960 ml) whole milk
- ½ cup (4 oz/115 ml) plus ½ cup (4 oz/115 ml) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 4 large egg yolks, at room temperature
- 6 tablespoons (2 oz/58 g) cornstarch
- ¼ cup (2 oz/57 g) butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt

CHOUX PASTRY

- 1½ cups (12 floz/360 ml) water
- ¾ cup (6 oz/170 g) butter
- 2 cups (10 oz/284 g) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 8 large eggs (400g/14oz), at room temperature

CARAMELIZED SUGAR

- 4 cups (32 oz/900 g) granulated sugar
- 1 cup (8 fl oz/240 ml) water
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar

MAKE THE CRÈME PÂTISSIÈRE

- 1** In a large saucepan over medium heat, combine the milk and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (4 oz/115 g) sugar and let come to a simmer, 2 to 3 minutes.
- 2** Meanwhile, in a medium bowl whisk together the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (4 oz/115 g) sugar with the whole eggs, yolks and cornstarch.
- 3** Once the milk is simmering, add it, one ladleful at a time, to the egg mixture while whisking constantly.
- 4** Return the mixture to the saucepan and over medium/low heat, bring to a gentle simmer while still whisking until it is the consistency of thick pudding, roughly 7 minutes.
- 5** Turn off the heat and stir in the butter, vanilla paste (or extract) and salt until the butter has melted. Pour into a large bowl and place a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface of the cream to prevent a skin from forming and set aside to cool down. Place in the refrigerator to go completely cold and thicken. This filling can be made up to 24 hours in advance.



MAKE THE CHOUX PASTRY PUFFS

- 1** Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C) with the FAN on (see class info handout). Line 4 large baking sheets with parchment. Slide the piping template print out under one of the sheets of parchment, off to one side of the pan. Set aside.
- 2** In a medium saucepan over medium heat, bring the water and butter to a simmer.
- 3** While the water is heating, in a medium bowl combine the flour, sugar and salt.
- 4** Once the water comes to a simmer, dump the flour mixture all at once into the saucepan and stir quickly until the dough pulls away from the sides and forms a ball, about 2 minutes.
- 5** Transfer the dough to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment (or transfer to a large bowl and use a handheld electric mixer) and mix on medium speed until the dough cools slightly.

- 6 Add the eggs to the dough one at a time, mixing thoroughly and scraping the bowl between each addition. At this point, the batter should look thick and glossy and when you lift the paddle or beaters, it should fall off in thick, v-shaped sheets or ribbons and hold its shape when it falls.
- 7 Fill a large pastry bag fitted with a large, round tip with the choux batter. Using the macaron template as a guide, hover the piping tip about ½ inch (12 mm) above the paper and pipe to fill every other circle to give room for the pastry to expand. Gently slide the template to the other side of the parchment to continue to pipe to fill the tray. At this point pipe just 2 baking trays of choux buns. Remove the template.
- 8 Using a wet finger just push down any peaks on top of the buns so they don't burn. Then sprinkle a few drops of water on each tray to help create steam in the oven.
- 9 Bake both trays (FAN ON) for 10 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 350°F (180°C) without opening the oven and bake for another 10 minutes, until the puffs are golden brown. Let cool and bring the oven temperature back up to 425°F (220°C).
- 10 Pipe the remaining batter onto the remaining baking sheets while the oven is reheating. Bake as above and let the puffs cool completely before filling.



ASSEMBLING THE CROQUEMBOUCHE

FILL THE CHOUX BUNS

- 1 Turn all of the choux buns upside down and with a thin knife poke a small hole in the bottom by twisting the knife around.



- 2 Fill a large piping bag fitted with the same round tip as above with the cold pastry cream. Place the piping tip into the center of each puff and fill with the pastry cream, counting 2 seconds while squeezing per puff. Place back on your baking tray and refrigerate until needed.



MAKE THE CARAMELIZED SUGAR FOR DIPPING

- 1 In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine sugar, water and cream of tartar and place over medium heat. Let the sugar dissolve before allowing the mix to simmer. Once dissolved, simmer the caramel without stirring, until it reaches a pale to medium golden brown. Do not allow it to get too dark at this point as it will continue to darken when removed from the heat. This can take around 10 minutes. Immediately remove from the stove top.



- 2 Place your caramel pot on a hot pad and take out your filled choux buns.
- 3 Working quickly with gloved hands and tongs, dip just the tops of every filled cream puff in the caramel, returning each dipped piece, caramel side up, to the baking sheets. During the dipping, if the caramel starts to cool and thicken too much, place the pot over low heat and warm enough to continue dipping. Place the choux buns in the fridge while you get ready for the next step if needed.



CREATING THE TOWER

- 1** Get a 9-inch (23-cm) serving platter ready. Rewarm the pot of caramel slightly to soften it for dipping.
- 2** Working quickly with gloved hands and tongs, dip a side of a choux bun in the caramel. Place the dipped side down on a serving plate with the caramel coated top facing out and continue dipping and placing until you have made an 8-inch (20 cm) ring. This is the base of your cone. Put 3 to 4 cream puffs in the center of the ring to support the structure.
- 3** Make your second ring by dipping the side of the cream puffs and placing the dipped side on top of the bottom ring in a staggered fashion, doing your best to minimize the gaps between the puffs and each ring slightly smaller than the one before to create a cone-shaped tower. Keep filling each completed ring with a few cream puffs for support until you get to the top. NOTE: Rewarm the caramel as needed.



MAKE AND APPLY THE SPUN SUGAR

- 1 Once the cone has been assembled, take a fork into the caramel, stir the remaining caramel and lift to check the consistency: It should fall off the tines of the fork in thin, string-like strands. It is easy to do this when your caramel has cooled down at the end of assembly. If the caramel is too cool then warm very slightly.
- 2 Use the fork to lift the caramel and wave it around the cream puffs to cover the tower in fine strings of sugar. Decorate with some colorful flowers and baby's breath.
- 3 Serve immediately or store in the refrigerator for up to 6 hours.

