

DANIEL GALMICHE



FRENCH
BRASSERIE
COOKBOOK

THE HEART OF FRENCH HOME COOKING

'This book is full of inspiring recipes that will immediately transport you to a French brasserie in your own home.'

Heston Blumenthal

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Dedication

To three very special people: to my mum, Anne-Marie, and my late Great-Aunt Suzanne for their love and passion for cooking, which they passed on to me; and to my first teacher, the late Yves Lalloz, who took me on when I was 15 and guided me wisely through my three-year apprenticeship with him; and finally to my wife, Claire, for her charm, friendship and unconditional support and my son Antoine, whose love of life and food is contagious. My profound thanks to you all.



FOREWORD

Ever since my first wonderful meal at Harvey's in Bristol many years ago, I have been a great fan of Daniel's cooking. He is a true master of contemporary French cuisine and his passion, expertise and attention to detail have ensured that dining at his table is never a disappointment. Who better, then, to teach the classics of the French kitchen?

The *French Brasserie Cookbook* contains all the recipes that you would expect, from Cheese Soufflé to Duck Rillettes, from Bouillabaisse to the perfect tarte tatin, but many of the classics have been given Daniel's unique twists. Alongside traditional onion soup, cassoulet and Beef Bourguignon are Lime Risotto, Moules Marinières with Lemongrass & Chilli, and Coffee Crème Caramel. It's a fantastic combination of recipes and flavours.

And despite Daniel's huge talent as a Michelinstarred chef, this book is extremely accessible. It is practical, unfussy and easy to use but, most satisfyingly, it is full of inspiring recipes that will immediately transport you to a French brasserie in your own home.

Heston Blumenthal

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INTRODUCTION

What is it about brasseries?

I'm sitting on my balcony at home, musing on food as usual and asking myself what it is about brasseries that we all love so much. So I'm thinking ... you can take a trip to Paris for a weekend and find yourself wandering happily through the wide boulevards, cobbled side streets and paved courtyards. You spot a stylish yet unassuming terrace and think you might sit outside and watch the world go by for an hour or so – but something draws you in. Is it the warm ambience and friendly faces? Is it the dark polished wood of the bar and ornate handles of the bar dispenser ready to serve you beer on tap? Is it the shining brass, the comfortable banquettes or the stunning art deco mirrors? Or is it quite simply the fantastic and mouth-watering smell of food drifting out of the kitchen? Whatever it is, it's irresistible.

As soon as you enter a brasserie in France, you are struck by a feeling of timelessness. You're ushered to a table by a *garçon de café* with a long, white apron, black bow tie and a quirky sense of humour. He seems to glide effortlessly amid the hustle and bustle of the busy interior and settles you into a cosy corner made more intimate by the stained-glass partition that boasts an elaborate hand-painted scene in the style of Toulouse Lautrec or a simple *fleur de lys*. You gaze around at the tarnished candlesticks and glamorous chandeliers and yet there is nothing grand or intimidating about being here – there's too much laughter and conviviality in the air for that. And it occurs to you that brasseries are something of a paradox: sophisticated yet informal, chic yet unpretentious, boisterous yet elegant.

Popular for more than a century, brasseries are the fabled haunt of artists and writers, the meeting place of politicians and prime ministers, an attraction where both tourists and locals alike linger to see and be seen. But it's not for the fashion or the frivolity that they gather here – it's for the food.

So how did it all start?

The word 'brasserie' actually means 'brewery' in French. In 1864, Frédéric Bofinger, a brewer from Alsace in northeastern France (the region that borders my own, Franche-Comté), made his way to Paris and opened a tiny bar in the heart of the Marais and Faubourg Saint-Antoine area. It served little more than draft beer and sauerkraut. At that time, numerous people were moving to Paris from war-torn Alsace in search of work, so there was a ready market. Beer on tap was unheard of in Paris back then and the quality of the sauerkraut was second to none. The combination took the city by storm and in no time brasseries were springing up all over Paris. The rest of France soon followed, and I think, for this reason, Bofinger could rightly claim to be the father of the Parisian brasserie. What started as a smoky bar filled with Alsatian refugees grew into a magnificent dining room with polished wood, gleaming brass and a stained-glass dome.

Today, brasseries are fashionable hotspots where politicians continue to rub shoulders with artists – but there is more to them than glamour. Brasseries are popular because the food they serve is homely, heart-warming and delicious. You can eat a simple sandwich or enjoy a *grand repas*, and they will often serve everything from early breakfasts right through to late suppers in the small hours. Among the famous brasseries in Paris are: Bofinger, La Coupole and Brasserie Lipp, to name but a few. However, no matter where you are in France, if you find a good brasserie, you will find a good meal – and you won't have to pay a fortune for it either.

Some brasseries will be modern and chic and some laden with so much history they are practically national monuments. But choose carefully – there are plenty on main streets, but the best ones are

often tucked away down side streets and hidden behind porchways.

How many restaurants can boast the illustrious likes of Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Salvador Dalí, Henry Miller, Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse among their clientele? Well, La Coupole can. Few people take a trip to Paris without visiting this renowned brasserie at least once.

It is said that, in 1944, when the Allied armies were poised to move into Paris to liberate it, the writer Ernest Hemingway became frustrated at the delay because he wanted to eat at his favourite brasserie. Borrowing a car, he drove unprotected into the French capital a whole day before the official liberators made their move and decided to 'liberate' La Coupole personally. The things we will do for the love of food!

From region to region

Brasseries make the most of local produce. There is a kind of regional pride, which ensures that you will always be served the best of whatever is grown or produced in the region. So eating in a brasserie in the South of France is a very different experience to eating in one in, say, Brittany. They all promote their own regional classics, often alongside well-known dishes from other areas. In Franche-Comté (my region), it could be Morteau sausage with sautéed potatoes and melted Vacherin Mont d'Or cheese. Up the road in Alsace, it could be *choucroute* (sauerkraut) or *baeckeoffe* (a kind of hotpot of potatoes, onion and pork). In Brest in Brittany, it could be seabass baked in a sea-salt crust, and in Paris it might be coq au vin. And if you are in one of France's great brasseries, you will probably find all these specialities on one menu. Whatever region you find yourself in, brasseries will always offer a great variety of food. So whether you want to have a quick meeting over a coffee and a croissant or to while away the hours with a friend over steak frites and a glass of red wine, you're in the right place.

Home from home

Actually, cooking French food doesn't need to be complicated, and bringing brasserie dishes into the home is returning them to their rightful place. After all, this is where most of them started, as most popular regional dishes served in brasseries would have been the ones that were originally firm family favourites. For example, if you lived in Nancy in Lorraine, you would probably have eaten quiche lorraine; and if you lived in Bouches-du-Rhône, near Marseilles, it would have been bouillabaisse (a fish dish made with saffron and tomatoes), *boudin noir* (black pudding), coq au vin, *tarte aux pommes* (apple tart), crème caramel – all dishes that were cooked at home long before they were available in brasseries. Perhaps that's the reason why they have a special place in our hearts.

The love of food has been with me as long as I can remember. My experience has come from sources that range from my grandmother to Michel Roux, but for me, the journey started with the wonderful home cooking of my grandmother. (I call her Grand-Mère in this book, although she was actually my great aunt; she took my natural grandmother's place so readily after her passing that it would have felt odd for us children to call her anything else.) My first memory is of Grand-Mère's kitchen on the farm my grandparents owned in Franche-Comté, where I passed much of my childhood. I spent most Sunday afternoons and a large part of the summer holidays playing in haystacks around the farm with my brother and sister. If we weren't chasing cows, we were stealing cherries from the neighbouring farm, stuffing as many as we could into our mouths and pockets before the farmer could catch us. Even now when I walk through fields, I find it hard to resist such temptations – old habits die hard, I guess!

If I close my eyes and think back, I can still recall the scent of freshly baked cakes luring me in from the fields. It wasn't long before I was in that kitchen constantly: watching, learning, helping Grand-Mère prepare the fruit I'd collected. I'm told that, at the age of five, I stood in the middle of the

kitchen and announced, ‘When I grow up, I’m going to be a chef!’ Funny how history has a habit of repeating itself: I have a beautiful son who, strangely enough, at the age of five, stood in the middle of my kitchen and said, ‘When I grow up, I’m going to be a chef!’ Well, what can you do?

My father, who was also called Daniel, played a large part, too. He was very close to nature, and walks were a daily routine that he always said he couldn’t do without. There was nothing he loved more – apart, perhaps, from hunting for food and then sharing the meal with family and friends. My father was what we call in France *une fine gueule*, which I can only translate as ‘somebody who really loves good food’. We used to walk through the ancient, plentiful forests and he would tell me about the plants, the trees and the animal footprints that we came across. I hold such special memories of these days.

Papa and I usually went pheasant hunting on a Saturday and so would be woken up on Sunday morning by the scent of delicately smoked bacon and pheasant roasting in red wine, which Maman (the other wonderful cook of my childhood) had been preparing since who knows what time. Sometimes there would even be an apple tart in the oven at the same time and the combination of aromas would drift up the stairs and pull us out of our cosy beds. The pheasant was normally prepared with braised cabbage and roasted turnips glazed in the pheasant *jus*. Utterly delicious and quintessential French home cooking.

Maman was another great cook taught by Grand-Mère (she had no choice but to be a great cook because Papa loved food so much). I just happened to be around when she was cooking – eating, tasting and cooking – completely unaware that my future was being shaped at that time.

When I became an apprentice chef at the age of fifteen, I had no idea how hard it was going to be. I had to complete three years before I could reach the next stage of becoming a commis chef, and there was still a long road ahead. I was catapulted from restaurant to restaurant, learning more and more as I went until, finally, I was given my first Head Chef position. Having reached this position, it started all over again. Passion, hard work and sheer bullheadedness somehow got me where I am today.

I hope my love of simple brasserie food not only encourages you to cook at home and enjoy the food you would normally just eat on holiday, but also inspires you to become hunters and gatherers again. How much more fun is it to take the children fruit picking or fishing than to drag them round the supermarket on a Saturday afternoon? I’m not expecting anyone to go out and spear the nearest wild boar, just to entice you to go, say, strawberry picking or foraging for wild garlic.

In this book, you will find some lovely, uncomplicated dishes that come from all over France. Some are traditional with a twist (for example, I have made them lighter or more up-to-date); others are specialities from particular regions but made my way. All of these recipes are ones that I cook at home with my wife, Claire, and son, Antoine. Hopefully, once you’ve tried them, you will make them again and again. I wanted to create a book that’s not too ‘cheffy’ (the kind that only chefs can follow) but a straightforward home cookbook that’s fun to read and inspires you to cook some really terrific French food – so don’t leave it on the coffee table! If you use this cookbook on a regular basis, it will make me very happy.

A few technical terms

Here is a glossary of some of the culinary terms and techniques I’ve used when writing these recipes. You may be familiar with some of them but less so others.

TO JULIENNE: Cut vegetables or fruit zest into thin sticks 1–2mm/ $\frac{1}{32}$ – $\frac{1}{16}$ in thick and 3cm/ $1\frac{1}{4}$ in long, using a knife or a mandoline. They are generally cooked in butter (and the zest in syrup), covered, until quite soft. Raw vegetables that are to be served as an hors d’oeuvre can also be cut in juliennes.

TO BOIL: When using a deep saucepan with the amount of liquid required, you bring it to the boil over direct heat and maintain it for the specific time given in your recipe method.

TO POACH: When you cook food in a liquid (this can be water, bouillon, stock, or syrup) that is very hot but not bubbling, at a temperature just below the simmer. Suitable for gently cooking poultry, meat, vegetables, eggs or fruit, and delicate foods that could break in a vigorously bubbling liquid.

TO SIMMER: When you cook food in a hot liquid kept just below the boiling point and bubbling very gently.

TO BRAISE: When you roast or brown a piece of meat, poultry or vegetable in fat, then add a small amount of liquid and simmer in a covered pot over a low heat.

TO FRY: To cook in hot fat (oil, butter or lard), with food either totally submerged (deep frying) or fat coming halfway up the food (pan-frying). Often used to cook vegetable juliennes, potatoes, fish and chicken.

TO GRIDDLE: When you chargrill meat, poultry, fish or vegetables in a heavy-based frying pan over a high heat. There are two types of griddle pans – ridged and flat. For my recipes I use the ridged variety that produces charred lines. These look impressive and create a lovely, gentle, caramelized flavour.

TO SAUTÉ: When you put a little fat (oil, butter or lard) in a shallow pan, add potatoes, vegetables, mushrooms, meat, poultry or fruits, and quickly toss them over a medium to high heat to brown or cook through. It is important to keep the food moving around the pan.

TO DEGLAZE: When, after sautéing, you add a liquid, such as alcohol, juice or vinegar, stir to dissolve the caramelized brown bits in the pan, and then allow half to evaporate quickly. If you are using alcohol, you can set it alight (*flamber* it).

TO REDUCE: When you have a lot of liquid in a pan, and you need to decrease the volume over a medium to high heat. Make sure you get to the level or consistency directed in the recipe method.

CONFIT: When a piece of pork, goose, duck or turkey is cooked in its own fat and stored in a pot, it is called *confit*. A vegetable confit would be done in olive oil. To ‘confit’ something is one of the oldest means of storing food.

RAGOÛT: A stew made from meat, poultry, game, fish or vegetables that are cut into pieces of uniform size and shape and cooked with or without first being browned in a sauté pan. It is generally flavoured with herbs and spices. The ragoût dates back to the 17th century when, in classic French, the word was used to describe anything that stimulated the appetite.

TIAN: The name given to a dish that consists of alternate layers of sliced vegetables. It may be made with or without onions and garlic, but would definitely be sprinkled with herbs and well seasoned. It is also the name of Provençal earthenware pots.

Daniel



THE BASICS

Stocks, sauces and pastry are essential ingredients in many classic French dishes, and in this chapter I will be showing you how to make them. With my stocks, I like to have the real flavour of the main ingredient coming through – the intensity is the vital thing. Sauces are important too. Although they are often made with a few, simple ingredients, they can transform a plain dish into something really special. I'm passionate about good pastry, which is the foundation of many of my favourite recipes and essential to a good pie or tart – whether it is savoury or sweet.

CHICKEN STOCK

Makes 2l/70fl oz/8 cups

Preparation time 10 minutes, plus 1 hour cooling

Cooking time 2 hours 40 minutes

2kg/4lb 8oz chicken wings or bones, or 2 chicken carcasses

1 thyme sprig

2 carrots, peeled and halved lengthways

1 small handful of curly parsley stems

1 small onion, unpeeled and halved

6 black peppercorns

Put all the ingredients in a large, heavy-based saucepan, cover with 4l/140fl oz/16 cups cold water and bring to the boil over a high heat. As soon as the stock starts to boil, foam will begin to form on the surface. Reduce the heat to low and skim off the foam, using a ladle, then simmer gently, uncovered, for 2–2½ hours. By this time the liquid will have reduced by half and the flavour will have intensified. Remove from the heat, pass the stock through a sieve, using a ladle to help you, then leave it to cool for at least 1 hour. Your stock is then ready to use.

If you want to freeze your stock, divide the cooled stock into small plastic tubs with lids, leaving some space for it to expand, and pop the containers in the freezer. Your stock will keep for up to 4 weeks.



LAMB STOCK

Makes 2l/70fl oz/8 cups

Preparation time 15 minutes, plus 1 hour cooling

Cooking time 3 hours 50 minutes

1.25kg/2lb 12oz lamb bones, trimmed and prepared by your butcher

2 tbsp olive oil

1 rosemary or thyme sprig

2 parsley sprigs

1 garlic bulb, unpeeled and halved crossways

1 small onion, unpeeled and quartered

6 black peppercorns

2 large tomatoes, quartered

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4. Put the bones in a baking tray and roast for 20 minutes or until golden brown, stirring occasionally to make sure they colour evenly. Remove the bones from the tray and put them in a large, heavy-based saucepan. Add all the remaining ingredients, except the tomatoes, and cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes. Add the tomatoes, then cook for a further 10 minutes.

Add 4l/140fl oz/16 cups cold water and bring to the boil over a high heat. As soon as the stock starts to boil, foam will begin to form on the surface. Reduce the heat to low and skim off the foam, using a ladle. Simmer for 1 hour, uncovered, then top up the water to its previous level and simmer for a further 2 hours. By this time the liquid will have reduced by half. Remove from the heat, pass the stock through a sieve, using a ladle to help you, then leave it to cool for at least 1 hour. It should be a lovely, shiny, clear, golden brown colour. Your stock is then ready to use.

If you want to freeze your stock, divide the cooled stock into small plastic tubs with lids, leaving some space for it to expand, and pop the containers in the freezer. Your stock will keep for up to 4 weeks.

FISH STOCK

Makes 2l/70fl oz/8 cups

Preparation time 10 minutes, plus 1 hour cooling

Cooking time 2 hours 40 minutes

1.25kg/2lb 12oz fresh fish bones, flesh removed

1 small handful of curly parsley stems

1 small onion, unpeeled and quartered

1 thyme sprig

1 celery stick, peeled and halved

6 black peppercorns

Place the fish bones in a large bowl, cover with cold water and rest for 10 minutes, then rinse thoroughly using a sieve. Repeat three times.

Put the bones in a large heavy-based saucepan with all the other ingredients, cover with 4l/140fl oz/16 cups cold water and bring to the boil over a high heat. As soon as the stock starts to boil, foam will begin to form on the surface. Reduce the heat to low and skim off the foam, using a ladle, then simmer gently, uncovered, for 2–2½ hours. By this time the liquid will have reduced by half and the flavour will have intensified. Remove from the heat, pass the stock through a sieve, using a ladle to help you, then leave it to cool for at least 1 hour. Your stock is then ready to use.

If you want to freeze your stock, divide the cooled stock into small plastic tubs with lids, leaving some space for it to expand, and pop the containers in the freezer. Your stock will keep for up to 4 weeks.



VEGETABLE STOCK

Makes 1.5l/52fl oz/6 cups

Preparation time 15 minutes, plus 1 hour cooling

Cooking time 2 hours 15 minutes

2 tbsp olive oil

1 celery stick, peeled and chopped, or 1 small handful of celery leaves

1 thyme sprig

1 spring onion, chopped

1 handful of parsley stems, chopped

1 garlic clove

2 carrots, peeled and halved lengthways

2 new potatoes, halved

6 black peppercorns

2 button mushrooms, halved

Briefly warm the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Add all the remaining ingredients and cook, partially covered, for 10 minutes. Add 3l/105fl oz/12 cups cold water and bring to the boil over a high heat, then reduce the heat to low and simmer, uncovered, for 2 hours or until reduced by half. Remove from the heat, pass the stock through a sieve, using a ladle to help you, then leave it to cool for at least 1 hour. Your stock is then ready to use.

If you want to freeze your stock, divide the cooled stock into small plastic tubs with lids, leaving some space for it to expand, and pop the containers in the freezer. Your stock will keep for up to 4 weeks.

FRENCH VINAIGRETTE

Makes 185ml/6fl oz/¾ cup

Preparation time 5 minutes

2 tsp Dijon mustard

2 tbsp red or white wine vinegar or balsamic vinegar

125ml/4fl oz/½ cup olive oil or rapeseed oil

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a small bowl or jug, whisk together the mustard, vinegar and 2 tablespoons water, then whisk in the oil. You should have quite a thick, glossy liquid. Season with salt and pepper.

Use straightaway or cover and keep in the fridge for up to 1 week.



Sauce hollandaise

HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

Makes 425ml/15fl oz/1¾ cups

Preparation time 5 minutes

Cooking time 25 minutes

2 tbsp white wine vinegar

2 large egg yolks, beaten

350g/12oz butter, melted

juice of ½ lemon

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Put 6 tablespoons water in a small saucepan over a medium heat. Add the vinegar, season with salt and pepper and simmer for 2 minutes until reduced by half and the liquid becomes syrupy. Transfer the vinegar reduction to a heatproof bowl and rest it over a saucepan of gently simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl does not touch the water (this is called a bainmarie). Add the egg yolks and beat the mixture continuously over a low heat until it turns white, thickens and the liquid coats the back of a spoon. Don't let the water boil or your sauce will turn into scrambled eggs!

Now add the melted butter to the vinegar reduction a little at a time, omitting any 'milk solids' that form at the bottom of the pan, whisking continuously. When it starts to thicken, add 1 tablespoon water, then continue adding the butter until it is all incorporated. The mixture should be smooth and light – you may need to add a little more water to achieve this consistency. Season again with salt and pepper and keep warm in the bainmarie until ready to serve. Just before serving, squeeze in a few drops of lemon juice. Taste and add more juice if you like a stronger lemony flavour.

Mayonnaise au safran

SAFFRON MAYONNAISE

Makes 200ml/7fl oz/scant 1 cup

Preparation time 10 minutes

Cooking time 5 minutes

a good pinch of saffron threads

2 egg yolks

1 tbsp French mustard

150ml/5fl oz/scant $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sunflower or grapeseed oil

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

a squeeze of lemon juice (optional)

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

To create your essence of saffron, put the saffron and 2 tablespoons water in a small saucepan over a low heat. Simmer for 4–5 minutes to allow the saffron to release its flavour and colour. When it is a strong deep-orange colour, strain the liquid into a bowl and, using a whisk, beat the egg yolks and mustard into it. Season with salt and pepper and a few drops of lemon, if liked, then drizzle in the oil a little at a time, stirring continuously. Add the garlic and then whisk in 2 tablespoons hot water to help it bind. The mayonnaise should be glossy and luscious!

Keep in the fridge and serve cold.



Sauce vierge

SAUCE VIERGE

Makes 150ml/5fl oz/scant $\frac{2}{3}$ cup

Preparation time 10 minutes

Cooking time 3 minutes

4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 shallot, chopped

1 tomato, deseeded and diced

juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ lime

1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

1 handful of flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Put the oil in a small saucepan and briefly warm it over a low heat for about 30 seconds. Add the shallot and cook for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the tomato, lime juice and balsamic vinegar. Just before serving, add the parsley and season with salt and pepper. Enjoy warm drizzled over your dish.

GRAND-MÈRE'S SWEET PASTRY

Baking was Grand-Mère Suzanne's thing, and most of the time, she did it without measuring. She knew whether something was right just by looking at it, and when it came to cakes and tarts, no one could match her. Grand-Mère's pastry is sweet, and is great for apple, pear and mixed-fruit tarts – actually it's great for all desserts in general.

Makes enough for a 28cm/11¼in tin

Preparation time 15 minutes, plus 30 minutes chilling

125g/4½oz unsalted butter, roughly diced and softened to room temperature

85g/3oz²/₃ cup icing sugar, sifted, plus extra for dusting

1 egg

2 egg yolks

250g/9oz/2 cups plain flour, plus extra for kneading the dough

Put the butter and sugar in a large mixing bowl and beat with a wooden spoon until nice and creamy. Stir in the egg and egg yolks, then add the flour and mix everything together with your fingers until it forms a lovely crumbly texture. Press the mixture together to form a ball. On a lightly-floured surface knead the pastry with the palm of your hand for 1–2 minutes, or until it forms a ball easily and is soft to the touch. Watch out – don't overwork the pastry or it will go back to the crumbly texture! Flatten slightly with the palm of your hand, wrap it in cling film and leave in the fridge for at least 30 minutes before use – this helps it to relax – and, meanwhile, so can you!



SWEET SHORT PASTRY

Makes enough for a 28cm/11¼in tin

Preparation time 15 minutes, plus 2 hours chilling

175g/6oz butter, softened

a pinch of salt

1 tsp caster sugar

1 egg yolk

3 tbsp milk or water, at room temperature

250g/9oz/2 cups plain flour

Put the butter, salt, sugar, egg yolk and milk in a mixing bowl and mix together by hand. Add the flour slowly, mixing until just combined. Be careful not to overwork it or it will become too elastic. When the pastry is ready, either wrap it in a clean cotton tea towel or put it on a plate, covered with a clean cotton tea towel, and leave in the fridge for 2 hours before using – this will relax the dough and make it easier to use.

SAVOURY SHORT PASTRY

Makes enough for a 28cm/11¼in tin

Preparation time 15 minutes, plus 2 hours chilling

125g/4½oz butter, roughly diced and softened to room temperature

250g/9oz/2 cups plain flour, plus extra for kneading the dough

a pinch of salt

1 egg yolk

3 tbsp milk or water

Put the butter, flour and salt in a mixing bowl and mix together by hand until it is a crumbly, powdery texture. Add the egg yolk and milk and continue working the pastry until the ingredients are combined and the texture is smooth. On a lightly floured surface, knead the pastry for about 1–2 minutes until silky smooth. When the pastry is ready, either wrap it in a clean cotton tea towel or put it on a plate, covered with a clean cotton tea towel and leave in the fridge for 2 hours before using – this will relax the dough and make it easier to use.



Pâte à choux

CHOUX PASTRY

Makes 30–40 profiteroles

Preparation time 15 minutes, plus 40 minutes resting and making the crème pâtissière

Cooking time 40 minutes

180g/6¼oz butter

5g/⅛oz/scant 1 tsp salt

scant 1 tbsp sugar

250g/9oz/2 cups plain flour

8 small eggs

a few drops of vanilla extract

Crème Pâtissière (see [page 24](#)) or extra-thick custard flavoured with chocolate, vanilla or crushed hazelnuts, if liked, for filling

Put the butter, salt, sugar and 500ml/17fl oz/2 cups water in a large saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat, add the flour and mix to combine using a whisk. Return to a medium heat and stir gently with a wooden spoon until the mixture starts to dry and comes off the spoon easily and sweats slightly. Remove again from the heat and add the eggs one by one, whisking gently, until they are totally absorbed by the paste. You should have a lovely yellow, silky mixture. Stir in the vanilla extract and set the pastry aside to rest for 35–40 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 185°C/365°F/gas 4–5 and line a baking tray with baking parchment. Using a piping bag, pipe the pastry onto the baking tray to make 2.5cm/1in-thick balls. Bake for 20 minutes in the preheated oven, then turn the oven off and leave the profiteroles inside for another 10 minutes to dry them. They should be very light. Remove from the oven and transfer to a cooling rack to cool completely.

To fill the profiteroles, cut open from the bottom to the top, using a sharp knife, and pipe in the filling of your choice, such as crème pâtissière or extra-thick custard flavoured with chocolate, vanilla or crushed hazelnuts.

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