

French Croquembouche

Make an authentic French Croquembouche with choux pastry, vanilla cream filling, and caramel. Perfect tower dessert for weddings and holidays.

1h	30 min	1h 30min	8	Medium
PREP	COOK	TOTAL	SERVINGS	DIFFICULTY

French Croquembouche

Ingredients

- 2 cup water
- 2 cup flour
- 10 egg
- 4 egg yolk
- 3 tbsp corn starch
- 2 cup unsalted butter
- 3 cup granulated sugar
- 2 cup milk
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp salt

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the Choux Pastry**

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper.
- 2** Combine 2 cups water, 2 cups butter, and 3 tablespoons sugar in a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Bring to a rolling boil over medium-high heat, stirring until butter completely melts and mixture is bubbling vigorously.
- 3** Remove pan from heat and immediately add 2 cups flour all at once. Stir vigorously with a wooden spoon until mixture forms a smooth ball that pulls away from the sides of the pan, about 1 minute.
- 4** Return pan to medium heat and stir constantly for 2 minutes until a thin film forms on the bottom of the pan. Transfer hot paste to a stand mixer bowl and beat on medium speed for 1 minute to cool slightly.
- 5** Add 10 eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition until fully incorporated. The paste should be smooth, glossy, and fall in a thick ribbon when lifted.
- 6** Transfer choux paste to a piping bag fitted with a ½-inch round tip. Pipe 1-inch mounds onto prepared baking sheets, spacing them 2 inches apart.
- 7** Bake for 15 minutes at 400°F (200°C), then reduce to 375°F (190°C) and bake 25-30 minutes more until golden brown and crisp. Pierce each puff immediately with a knife tip to release steam and cool completely on wire racks.

8 **Make the Pastry Cream**

Whisk 4 egg yolks, remaining 3 cups sugar, and 2 teaspoons vanilla in a medium bowl until smooth.

9 Heat 3 cups milk in a heavy saucepan over medium heat until small bubbles appear around edges. Slowly pour hot milk into egg mixture, whisking constantly to prevent curdling.

10 Return mixture to saucepan and cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 3-4 minutes. Remove from heat, whisk in 2 cups butter until smooth, and refrigerate until completely cool.

11 **Fill and Assemble**

Transfer cooled pastry cream to a piping bag with a small round tip. Make a small hole in the bottom of each puff and fill with cream until slightly firm to touch.

12 Combine remaining 2 cups sugar with 2 teaspoons water in a heavy saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat without stirring until light amber, about 8-10 minutes. Remove from heat and cool 1-2 minutes until slightly thickened.

13 Working quickly, dip each cream puff top in caramel and arrange in a circle on serving plate. Build successive smaller circles on top, creating a cone shape about 12 inches tall. Drizzle remaining caramel over finished tower and serve immediately.

Tips

Ensure all choux puffs are the same size by using a piping bag with a consistent pressure and measuring the diameter as you pipe each one.

Pierce a small hole in each baked puff immediately after removing from the oven to release steam and prevent them from becoming soggy.

Test your caramel's readiness by dropping a small amount into cold water – it should form hard threads when it reaches the proper temperature.

Work with caramel quickly but safely by keeping a bowl of ice water nearby in case of burns, and use a fork to dip puffs rather than your fingers.

If your caramel becomes too thick during assembly, gently reheat it over low heat until it reaches working consistency again.

Place your serving plate in the freezer for 10 minutes before assembly to help the caramel set faster and create a more stable base.

Create spun sugar decorations by dipping a fork in hot caramel and quickly flicking it back and forth over parchment paper to create delicate sugar threads.

Serve croquembouche within 2-3 hours of assembly for the best texture contrast between crispy caramel and creamy filling.