

PASTRY

A mixture of flour & fat & sometimes egg, bound together with water. It was used by the Romans to enclose baked meat and therefore seal in the flavour and juice. The coating was then thrown away, until it was discovered that the paste was actually quite good to eat. Today there are several different types of pastry – short pastries, flaked pastries, suetcrust, hot water crust, choux & fillo pastry. The main difference between them is the method of introducing fat. Each kind of pastry produces a different texture and variation in flavour & is suited to a certain range of recipes. It may be savoury or sweet & is usually baked, although some pastries are steamed or deep-fried.

Short Pastries

These are some of the easiest to make & the most versatile. They can be plain or flavoured, savoury or sweet, and form the basis of a wide range of flans, pies and tartlets. They are made by rubbing fat into flour until it is broken down into flour-coated crumbs which then bake to a light crisp texture.

Cool ingredients and conditions are essential and the dough should be handled as little as possible. It is not necessary to grease the baking equipment when cooking this type of pastry.

Shortcrust Pastry

This plain, short pastry is probably the most widely used of all pastries. For shortcrust pastry, the proportion of flour to fat is 2:1, or twice the quantity. Therefore, for a recipe using quantities of shortcrust pastry other than 225gms. simply use half the quantity of fat to the flour weight specified.

225gms. Plain flour
Pinch of salt
50gms. of butter or block margarine, chilled and diced
50gms. of lard, chilled and diced.

Place the flour & salt in a bowl and add the fat to the flour. Using the fingertips of both hands, rubbing the fat lightly into the flour until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Add 45 – 60 ml. of water, sprinkling it evenly over the surface. (Uneven addition may cause blistering when the pastry is cooked). Stir in with a round bladed knife until the mixture begins to stick together in large lumps.

With one hand, collect the dough mixture together to form a ball. Knead lightly for a few seconds to give a firm, smooth dough. Do not over handle the dough.

To roll out, sprinkle a very little flour on a working surface and the rolling pin (not on the pastry) and roll out the dough evenly in one direction only, turning it occasionally. The usual thickness is 0.3cm (1/8" inch). Do not pull or stretch the pastry.

The pastry can be baked straight away, but it is better if allowed to rest for about 3 minutes in the tin or dish, covered with foil or cling film, in the refrigerator. Bake at 200 – 220°C, except where otherwise stated in a recipe, until light browned.

Variations :-

Wholemeal Pastry - Follow the recipe and method for shortcrust pastry but use plain wholemeal flour instead of white. You may need a little extra water due to the absorbency of wholemeal flour.

Nut Pastry Follow the recipe and method for shortcrust pastry, but stir in 25gms. very finely chopped, shelled walnuts, peanuts, cashew nuts, hazelnuts or almonds before adding the water. When using salted nuts, do not add salt to the flour.

Cheese Pastry Follow the recipe and method for shortcrust pastry, but stir in 100gms. of finely grated cheddar or other hard cheese and a pinch of mustard powder before adding the water.

Rich Shortcrust or Flan Pastry

This pastry is made by the same rubbing in method as shortcrust pastry, but the liquid used is beaten egg instead of water. It is usually sweetened with caster sugar which improve the flavour and is ideal for flan cases, small tarts and other sweet pastries. If the sugar is omitted, it can easy to prepare, flan pastry benefits from being chilled in the refrigerator for at least 3 minutes before being used.

100 gms. Flour
pinch of salt
75 gms. butter or block margarine and lard, diced 5ml caster sugar
1 egg, beaten

Place the flour and salt in a bowl. Rub the fat into the flour as for shortcrust pastry, until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs, then stir in the caster sugar.

Add the egg, stirring with a rind bladed knife until the ingredients begin to stick together in large lumps.

With one hand, collect the mixture together and knead lightly for a few seconds to give a firm, smooth dough. Roll out as for shortcrust pastry. Bake at 200°C unless otherwise stated, until lightly browned.

Pate Sucree (Sweet Pastry)

This French, rich, sweet, short pastry is the best choice for continental patisserie. Pate Sucree is thin, crisp yet melting in texture; it keeps its shape, shrinks very little and does not spread during baking. It is fairly quick and easy to make. Although it can be made in a mixing bowl, the classic way to make it is on a flat, cold surface such as marble.

100gms. Flour
Pinch of salt
50g caster sugar
50g butter at room temperature
2 egg yolks

Sift the flour and salt on to a work surface. Make a well in the centre and the sugar, butter and egg yolks. Using the fingertips of one hand, pinch and work the sugar, butter and egg yolks together until well blended. Gradually work in all the flour to bind the mixture together.

Knead lightly until smooth. Wrap the pastry in foil or cling film and leave to rest in the refrigerator or a cool place for about an hour, or overnight if possible.

Bake at 190°C unless otherwise stated, until light brown.

Cheese Pastry

There are 2 types and methods of making cheese pastry. The plainer version is made by the shortcrust pastry technique with grated cheese added and is easy to handle and less liable to crack when shaped. It is the best type to use for pies, tarts and flans.

This cheese pastry is a little more difficult to make and handle; the fat and cheese are creamed together, then the flour is worked in. This type is best used for small savouries, such as pastry and cocktail appetizers and savouries. Use a hard, dry, well flavoured cheese with a bite, such as Cheddar, Cheshire or Leicester, and grate it finely. A pinch of dry mustard added to the flour with the salt helps to bring out the cheese taste. Another flavour which blends well with cheese pastry is a pinch of cayenne pepper.

40g butter or block margarine
40g lard
75g Cheddar or other hard cheese, finely grated
100g flour
Pinch of salt

Cream the butter, lard and cheese together until soft. Gradually work in the flour and salt with a wooden spoon or a palette knife until the mixture sticks together.

With one hand, collect the mixture together and knead very lightly for a few seconds to give a smooth dough. Cover with greaseproof paper or cling film and leave the pastry in a cool place until required. Bake at 200°C unless otherwise stated, until lightly browned.

One Stage Short Pastry

This quick method for making pastry is completely different from the rubbed in method for shortcrust. Soft tub margarine, water and a little of the flour are creamed together, then the remaining flour is mixed in until a dough is formed. One stage short pastry can be used in any recipe using shortcrust pastry.

100g soft tub margarine
175g flour, sifted
15ml chilled water
pinch of salt

Place the margarine, 30ml flour and the water in a bowl. Cream with a fork for about 30 seconds until well mixed. Mix

the remaining flour with the salt to form a fairly soft dough and knead lightly until smooth. Roll out as for shortcrust pastry.
Bake at 190°C until lightly browned, or for the length of time indicated in individual shortcrust pastry recipes.

Oil or Fork-mix Pastry

Oil pastry is very quick to make and can be used instead of shortcrust pastry. As it is naturally slightly more greasy, it is best used for savoury rather than sweet dishes. Short and flaky in texture, oil pastry should be mixed quickly and used straight away, as it dries out and is too difficult to roll if left for even a short while or chilled.

40ml vegetable oil
15ml chilled water
100g flour
pinch of salt

Put the oil and water into a bowl. Beat well with a fork to form an emulsion. Mix the flour and salt together and gradually add to the mixture to make a dough.

Roll out on a floured surface or between pieces of greaseproof paper.

Bake at 200°C for the same length of time as shortcrust pastry.

Flaked Pastry

The light layered texture of flaked pastries is achieved by rolling and folding the dough to trap pockets of air between the layers of dough.

The proportion of fat to flour is much higher in all flaked pastries than shortcrust, and the methods of mixing it into the dough vary with the different types of flaked pastries.

Remember to rest all flaked pastries in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes after making and again after shaping and before baking. During baking, the air expands and the fat melts and is absorbed by the flour which leaves more air spacing. This gives the pastry its characteristic flaky texture.

Flaky Pastry

This pastry can be used instead of puff pastry in many savoury and sweet dishes where a great rise is not needed. The fat should be of about the same consistency as the dough with which it is to be combined, which is why it is worked on a plate beforehand.

225g plain flour
pinch of salt
175g butter or mixture of butter & lard
120 ml chilled water and a squeeze of lemon juice
Beaten egg to glaze

Mix the flour and salt together in a bowl. Soften the fat by working it with a knife on a plate, then divide it into four equal portions. Add one quarter of the fat to the flour and rub it into the flour between finger and thumb tips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Add enough water and lemon juice, stirring with a round bladed knife, to make a soft, elastic dough. Turn the dough on to a lightly floured surface, knead until smooth, then roll out into an oblong three times as long as it is wide.

Using a round bladed knife, dot a second quarter of the fat over the top two thirds of the pastry in flakes, so that it looks like buttons on a card. Fold the bottom third of the pastry up and the top third down, then turn it so that the folded edges are at the sides.

Seal the edges of the pastry by pressing with a rolling pin. Wrap the pastry in greaseproof paper and leave in the refrigerator to rest for 15 minutes. Re-roll as before and repeat twice more until the remaining fat has been used up.

Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured work surface to 0.3cm thick and use as required. Leave to rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before baking. Brush with beaten egg before baking to give the characteristic glaze.

Bake at 200°C unless otherwise stated.

Problems with Flaked Pastry

Hard & Tough : Too much liquid, dough insufficiently kneaded, rolling in of fat done too heavily and for too long, not kept cool, too much flour used during rolling, oven too cool.

Poor Volume, Lacking in Flakiness : Fat too warm and blended with flour instead of remaining in layers, lemon juice omitted (lemon juice reacts with the gluten in the flour which makes the dough more pliable), insufficient resting between rolling, edges sealed with glaze, oven too cool.

Soggy in middle : Under baking, oven too hot, baked too high in oven.

Shrinkage during Baking : Pastry over stretched during rolling, insufficient resting time.

Uneven Rise : Unevenly rolled or folded, fat unevenly distributed, sides not straight and corners not square during rolling out, edges not trimmed before use, insufficient resting between rolling or before baking, uneven temperature, too much glaze, particularly on edges.

Rough Puff Pastry

Similar in texture to flaky pastry, rough puff can be used instead of flaky, except when even rising and appearance are particularly important. Rough puff is quicker and easier to make than puff or flaky pastry.

225gm plain flour
pinch of salt
75g butter or block margarine, well chilled
75g lard
about 150 ml chilled water and a squeeze of lemon juice
Beaten egg to glaze

Mix the flour and salt together in a bowl. Cut the butter into 2cm cubes. Stir into the flour without breaking up the pieces. Add enough water and lemon juice to mix to a fairly stiff dough using a round bladed knife. On a lightly floured surface, roll out into an oblong three times as long as it is wide.

Fold the bottom third up and top third down, then turn the pastry so that the folded edges are at the sides. Seal the ends of the pastry with a rolling pin. Wrap the pastry in greaseproof paper and chill for 15 minutes.

Repeat this rolling and folding process three more times, turning the dough so that the folded edge is on the left hand side each time. Wrap the pastry in paper and chill for 30 minutes.

Roll out the pastry to 0.3cm thick and use as required. Leave to rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before baking. Brush with beaten egg before baking to give the characteristic glaze. Bake at 220°C.

Puff Pastry

The richest of all the pastries, puff requires patience, practice and very light handling. Whenever possible, it should be made the day before use. It is not practical to make in a quantity with less than 450gms. of flour weight. This is equivalent to 736gms. of frozen packets.

450gms. Of strong white flour
pinch of salt
450gms. Butter or white margarine
300ml. Chilled water
15ml. Lemon juice
beaten egg to glaze

Mix the flour and salt together in a bowl. Cut off 50gm butter and flatten the remaining butter with a rolling pin to slab 2cm thick. Cut the 50gm butter into small pieces, add to the flour and rub in. Using a round bladed knife, stir in enough water and lemon juice to make a soft, elastic dough.

Quickly knead the dough until smooth and shape into a round. Cut through half the depth in the shape of a cross. Open out to form a star. Roll out, keeping the centre four times as thick as the flaps. Place the slab of butter in the centre of the dough and fold over the flaps envelop style. Press gently with the rolling pin and roll out into a rectangle measuring about 40X20cm.

Fold the bottom third up and the top third down, keeping the edges straight. Seal the edges by pressing with the rolling pin. Wrap the pastry in greaseproof paper and leave in the refrigerator to rest for 30 minutes. Put the pastry on a lightly floured

working surface with the folded edges to the sides and repeat the rolling, folding and resting sequence five times.

Shape the pastry as required, then leave to rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before baking. Brush with beaten egg before baking. Bake at 220°C for about 15 minutes on its own, or longer if filled, except where otherwise stated.

Miscellaneous Pastries

This group includes the pastries like suetcrust, hot water crust, choux and fillo that are not made by either the traditional rubbing in or flaked pastry methods.

Hot Water Crust Pastry

This pastry is used to make savoury raised pies such as veal & ham pie and game pie. It is mixed with boiling water, which makes it pliable enough to mould into a raised pie that will hold its shape as it cools and during the baking. It is a strong pastry, fit to withstand the extra handling that it must receive during the shaping and also the weight of the savoury filling it must hold. Care must be taken when moulding hot water crust pastry to ensure that there are no cracks through which the meat juices can escape during baking. Keep the part of the pastry that is not actually being used covered with a cloth or an upturned bowl, to prevent it hardening before use.

450g plain flour
10ml salt
100 g lard
250 ml water

Mix the flour and salt together in a bowl. Make a well in the centre. In a small saucepan, melt the lard in the water, then bring to the boil and pour into the bowl. Working quickly beat the mixture with a wooden spoon to form a fairly soft dough.

Use one hand to pinch the dough lightly together and knead until smooth and silky. Cover with cling film or a damp tea towel and leave in a warm place to rest for at least 20 – 30 minutes so the dough becomes elastic and easy to work. Use as required but do not allow the pastry to cool. Bake at 220°C, usually reducing to 180°C depending on the individual recipe.

Suetcrust Pastry

This pastry may be used for both sweet and savoury basin puddings, roly-poly puddings and dumplings. It can be steamed, boiled or baked; the first 2 methods are the most satisfactory, as baked Suetcrust pastry is inclined to be hard. Suetcrust pastry is quick and easy to make, and should be light and spongy in texture – the correct mixing, quick light handling and long, slow cooking will achieve this. For a lighter texture, or if using wholemeal flour, replace 50g of the flour with 50g fresh breadcrumbs.

225 g self-raising flour
2.5 ml salt
100 g shredded suet
about 150 ml chilled water

Mix the flour, salt and suet together in a bowl. Using a round-bladed knife, stir in enough water to give a light, elastic dough. Knead very lightly until smooth. Roll out to 0.5 cm thick and use as required.

Steaming or boiling basin and roly-poly puddings takes about 2-4 hours, depending on filling and size. Roly-poly puddings can also be wrapped in foil and baked at 200°C for about 45 minutes, unless otherwise stated. Dumplings cooked in simmering liquid take about 25 minutes.

Lining a Pudding Basin with Suetcrust Pastry

Sweet and savoury filled and layered suet puddings in basins are a constant family favourite. The basin may be made of any heatproof material from glass or earthenware to certain kinds of plastic. It is important to use the size of basin specified in a recipe. The correct size basin should allow a space of about 1 cm at the top when the uncooked pudding is complete. Always grease the basin to prevent the pastry from sticking and if you do not have a steamer cook the pudding on a trivet in a saucepan at least 5 cm wider than the diameter of the basin, in boiling water that comes the halfway of the basin.

For a 1.7 litre pudding basin, roll out the pastry to a round about 35.5 cm in diameter. Using a sharp knife, cut out one quarter of the dough and reserve. Lightly grease the pudding basin.

Dust the top surface of the large piece of pastry with flour and fold in half, then in half again. Lift the pastry into the basin, unfold, press into the base and up the sides, taking care to seal the join well. The pastry should overlap the basin top by about 2.5 cm.

Spoon the filling into the lined pudding basin, taking care not to puncture the pastry lining. Gently spread out the filling so it is evenly distributed.

Roll out the remaining one-quarter of pastry to a round 2.5 cm wider than the top of the basin. Dampen the exposed edge of pastry lining the basin.

Lift the round of pastry on top of the filling. Push the pastry edges together to seal.

Cut a piece of greaseproof paper and a piece of foil large enough to cover the basin. Place them together and pleat across the middle to allow for expansion. Lightly grease the greaseproof side and put them over the pudding with the greaseproof side down.

Tie securely on the basin, running the string just under the rim. Make a strong handle of string across the basin top. Bring a large pan of water to the boil. Fit a steamer over the pan and put the pudding inside and cover. Steam for the specified time.

Choux Pastry

This light, crisp-textured pastry is used for making sweet and savoury Eclairs, cream puffs, aigrettes and gougiers. As long as the recipe instructions are strictly adhered to, choux pastry will always give good results. Always collect the ingredients together before starting to make choux pastry as all the flour needs to be added quickly as soon as the mixture has come to the boil.

Raw choux paste is too soft and sticky to roll out and is, therefore, piped or spooned on to a dampened baking sheet for baking. During baking, the moisture in the dough turns to steam and puffs up the mixture, leaving the centre hollow. Thorough cooking is important; if insufficiently cooked, the choux may collapse when taken from the oven and there will be uncooked pastry in the centre to scoop out.

When the cooked choux has cooled and dried out, it can be filled with whipped cream or a savoury filling. Choux pastry can also be deep-fried – pipe or spoon it directly into hot oil.

65 g plain or strong white flour

50 g butter or block margarine

150 ml water

2 eggs, lightly beaten

Sift the flour onto a plate or piece of paper. Put the fat and water together in a saucepan, heat gently until the fat has melted, then bring to the boil. Remove the pan from the heat. Tip the flour at once into the hot liquid. Beat thoroughly with a wooden spoon.

Continue beating the mixture until it is smooth and forms a ball in the centre of the pan (take care not to overbeat or the mixture will become fatty). Leave the pastry mixture to cool for a minute or 2.

Beat in the eggs, a little at a time, adding only just enough to give a piping consistency. It is important to beat the mixture vigorously at this stage to trap in as much air as possible. A hand held electric mixer is ideal for this purpose. Continue beating until the mixture develops an obvious sheen and the use as required.

Bake in the oven at 200°C. Immediately after the choux pastry is removed from the oven, it should be pierced to allow steam to escape.

Piping Choux Pastry

To fill a piping bag, usually fitted with a plain 0.5 cm nozzle, place it in a tall jug and turn back the open end over the jug rim. Spoon the pastry mixture into the bag and squeeze it down to eliminate air bubbles.

When making eclairs, it may help to mark evenly spaced lines on the baking sheet with the end of a wooden spoon as a guide for piping.

Hold the piping bag in one hand and, with the thumb and one finger of your other hand on the nozzle to guide it, press out the pastry. When the required length is reached, cut off the paste with a wet knife. Choux puffs and profiteroles can be piped or spooned into moulds.

Fillo (Phyllo) or Strudel Pastry

Fillo is a pastry of water-like thinness from the Middle East, which is used for both sweet and savoury pastries, such as the Greek baklava. It is identical to strudel pastry, which originated in Europe and is used for the popular apple strudel. Fillo or strudel pastry is fairly difficult and time consuming to make. Unlike most pastries, it requires warm ingredients and, instead of

light handling, it has to be kneaded and beaten. The dough is kneaded vigorously to enable the gluten in the flour to develop strength so the pastry can be stretched into a very thin, resilient sheet. For the same reason, strong plain flour is used as it yields more gluten to help produce elastic dough. The thin sheet is either spread with a filling and rolled or folded, or it is cut into rectangles and stacked with a filling in between.

Ready-made fillo or strudel pastry is available in sheets from continental shops, supermarkets and delicatessens.

225g strong white flour
2.5ml salt
1 egg lightly beaten
30 ml vegetable oil
1.25 ml lemon juice
75 ml lukewarm water
25 g butter, melted

Mix the flour and salt together in a large bowl. Make a well in the centre and pour in the egg, oil and lemon juice. Stirring with a fork, gradually add enough of the water to make a soft, sticky dough. Work the dough in the bowl until it leaves the sides. Turn out on to a lightly floured surface and knead for 15 minutes. The dough should feel smooth. Form it into a ball, place on a cloth and cover with a warmed bowl. Leave to rest in a warm place for 30 minutes.

Warm a rolling pin and lightly flour a clean cotton cloth. Place the ball of dough on the cloth and roll out into a rectangle about 0.3 cm thick, lifting and turning to prevent it sticking to the cloth.

Brush the top of the dough with a little melted butter. Gently stretch the dough by carefully lifting it on the backs of the hands and fingertips, and pulling it from the centre to the outside, trying to keep it in a rectangle.

Continue lifting and stretching the dough until it becomes paper thin and the rectangle measures no less than 75 X 50 cm. Trim off uneven thick edges with scissors or a sharp knife.

Leave the dough on the cloth to dry and rest for about 15 minutes before lifting off carefully. Bake at 190°C except where otherwise specified, until golden brown.

DOUGH (Pate De Cuisine Et De Patisserie)

A thick mixture of uncooked flour & liquid usually combined with other ingredients. The term is used to refer to mixtures such as pastry, scones and biscuits as well as those made with yeast. A dough is usually thick enough to knead & roll out or shape, as opposed to batters or cake mixtures which are much softer even liquid.

All dough's & batters, even sweet ones, are seasoned with a little salt to bring out the flavour. Wheat flour, which is the basis of most doughs & batters, contains gluten & starch, which ensure the cohesion of the finished product. The water or milk disperses the starch, dissolves the salt and sugar when present, and enables the raising agent to work. An effect similar to that of a raising agent is sometime obtained by adding beer, especially when making pancakes and brioche. The fat gives the pastry its final texture. It must be firm in consistency, yet malleable enough to be mixed into the flour or incorporated into the dough. When beaten with sugar, the fat becomes lighter.

Egg facilitates emulsification of the fat and also increases the richness of the dough after baking. Adding whisked egg whites makes the dough lighter, while the yolks colour it golden brown.

Baking powder and flour are sieved together so that they are thoroughly mixed. Dried yeast must be dissolved in water.

According to the type of handling to which the dough is to be subjected (kneading, knocking back, folding & rolling, beating, drying, pressing, proving, resting etc.), leavened dry, soft or runny dough's can be made.

Although some people consider pastry making to be an art, most people can achieve success by following the direction carefully and weighing the ingredients precisely.

The cooking process is of prime importance. The oven must be pre heated so that it is at the correct temperature when the dough or pastry is put in.

RAISED DOUGH & BATTERS

Bread, Brioche, Baba, Savarin & Kouglof (A sweeten yeast cake of Austrian origin which contain dried fruit and is baked in a special deep fluted tube tin) dough are made with either yeast or baking powder. The dough rises when CO₂ is released by the action of heat and moisture on the raising agent. Sponge, Genoise and Meringue mixtures rise slowly by the action of heat on the air trapped either in the egg yolks that have been whisked with sugar, or in the stiffly whisked egg whites. Other raised doughs include creamed cake mixtures, which rely on air trapped during beating and on a raising agent, & Choux Pastry, which swells in the oven, in hot oil or when poached. Frying and fritter batters contain either a raising agent or whisked egg whites, which are responsible for the puffy appearance of the finished product.

PASTRY

This is made with flour, fat, salt and a binding agent. The French have the following varieties : Pate Brisee (Short Crust Pastry, Basic Pie Dough), Pate Sablee and Pate Sucree (Rich Sweetened Short Crust Pastry) and Pate Feuilletée (Puff Pastry). French short crust pastry is dry and light. Made quickly and set aside to rest before use, it is the classic base for tarts, pate's, en croute, pies etc. Pate sablee, which is reserved for fine patisserie, is very crumbly and is used to make biscuits or pastry bases that are to be kept for sometimes and filled or decorated at the last moment. Puff pastry, which is richer in fat than the other types, takes longer to make but can be prepared in advance. Its uses are very varied, both in baking and patisserie.

FRYING BATTERS

These are more fluid than dough but are based on the same ingredients. Waffle and crisp batters are included in this category.

In all cases, it is the effect of heat which gives the cake or pastry its final texture: dry for pie crust, soft for sponge cakes, crisp for puff pastry, elastic for crepes, aerated for choux pastry or brioche dough etc.

Most dough and batters are prepared cold by mixing the ingredients fairly quickly, but some types notably choux pastry are mixed together over heat before being baked. Depending on the recipe the same dough may be cooked in different ways. Choux pastry for example is poached in water for gnocchies, baked for eclairs or deep fried for dauphine potatoes or soufflé fritters: puff pastry may be baked for tarts or deep fried for rissoles.