

Puff Pastry

Makes approx. 850g

Hands-on Time 1 hour

Resting Time +12 hours

Ingredients

350g Strong white bread flour (plus extra for dusting)

3/4 tsp Fine salt

350g Unsalted butter (60g softened, 290g chilled)

160ml Water

Equipment

Large bowl

Baking parchment

Rolling pin

Ruler/measure

Knife

The key rule you need to follow when making puff pastry is that you need to make it in a cool environment as possible! So make sure you don't have the oven on, or the heating cranked up to the max.

Place the flour into a large bowl.

Add the salt and 60g of softened butter.

Using one hand start mixing together the ingredients, adding the water using the other, until you have formed a dough. It can be a little lumpy, it doesn't need to be as smooth as silk.

Add a dash more water only if you really think it needs it, however the quantity stated should be just right.

Once the dough is ready, place on a piece of baking parchment, flatten into a rectangle, and wrap up.

Put in the fridge for an hour to get cold and firm.

With the dough in the fridge, you need to prepare the butter.

Lay a piece of baking parchment at least 40cm in length onto a worktop.

Place the 290g of chilled butter in the middle, and lay another piece of baking parchment on top.

You need to soften the butter to make it more manageable before rolling out. You can either do this by whacking it with the rolling pin a few times, or, as I prefer, press down on top using the palm of your hand.

Do this until it has started losing its shape and has softened.

Now, using your rolling pin, press and roll the butter into a rectangle measuring 20cm x 19cm.

Once you've started to flatten the butter I'd suggest folding over all four edges of the baking parchment into the required squarish shape and size.

With the paper now folded this allows you to press the butter up to the very edges, ensuring you get a crisp sided rectangle.

When finished, place the butter into the fridge for about an hour to firm up.

Once the hour is over, very lightly dust a worktop and rolling pin with flour.

Remove the dough from the fridge.

Unwrap, and place on the floured surface.

Roll the dough out to a 40cm x 20cm rectangle. As most surfaces in the kitchen aren't that deep it's easier to roll this out across the length of the worktop.

Try and get in the habit of rolling from the middle of the dough outwards in the same direction. Do not to roll back and forwards. Also lift the dough occasionally so it can relax and dust underneath with more flour if it starts sticking.

Take the wrapped butter out of the fridge and peel off the top layer of parchment.

Slice the butter in half along the length so you have two pieces 10cm x 19cm.

Flip one piece of butter onto the bottom third of the dough, so the top two-thirds are still exposed.

Carefully fold the butter covered dough over onto the the exposed dough.

Place the second piece of butter on top of this newly created layer.

Fold the remaining third of exposed dough over to cover the butter.

Seal the sides to ensure the butter is fully encased.

Rotate the dough 90 degrees.

Lightly dust your rolling pin and roll the dough out into another rectangle at least 40cm in length.

Get in the habit of rolling from the middle outwards, and lifting the dough now and then, as I mentioned before. Eventually these will become second nature to you as you make this dough.

Fold one third of the dough over, like you did with the first piece covered with butter. Fold the remaining exposed dough over again to cover this newly made layer. Essentially you are repeating the first step without the butter.

This is the first turn.

Wrap the dough in baking parchment and chill for an hour. By chill I mean the dough and yourself. Go have a coffee break!

When the hour is up very lightly flour the worktop and rolling pin if you need to, and take the dough out of the fridge.

Place the dough on the worktop so the folds from the previous turn are not facing you.

Rolling the dough again so it's at least 40cm in length.

Repeat the previous turn again. This is the second turn.

Wrap again in parchment and chill for an hour before rolling the dough out and performing the third and final turn.

Just in case you are wondering, there are now 54 layers of butter in the dough.

Generously wrap the dough with parchment.

Leave in the fridge overnight if you intend on using it for baking the next day. Otherwise pop into the freezer for use later. I'd advise double wrapping the dough if you're freezing it. If you are using it later, be sure to take the dough out of the freezer the night before you want to use it and defrost in the fridge.

Congratulations, you have now successfully made puff pastry! See, it wasn't that difficult!