

THE FRENCH COOK

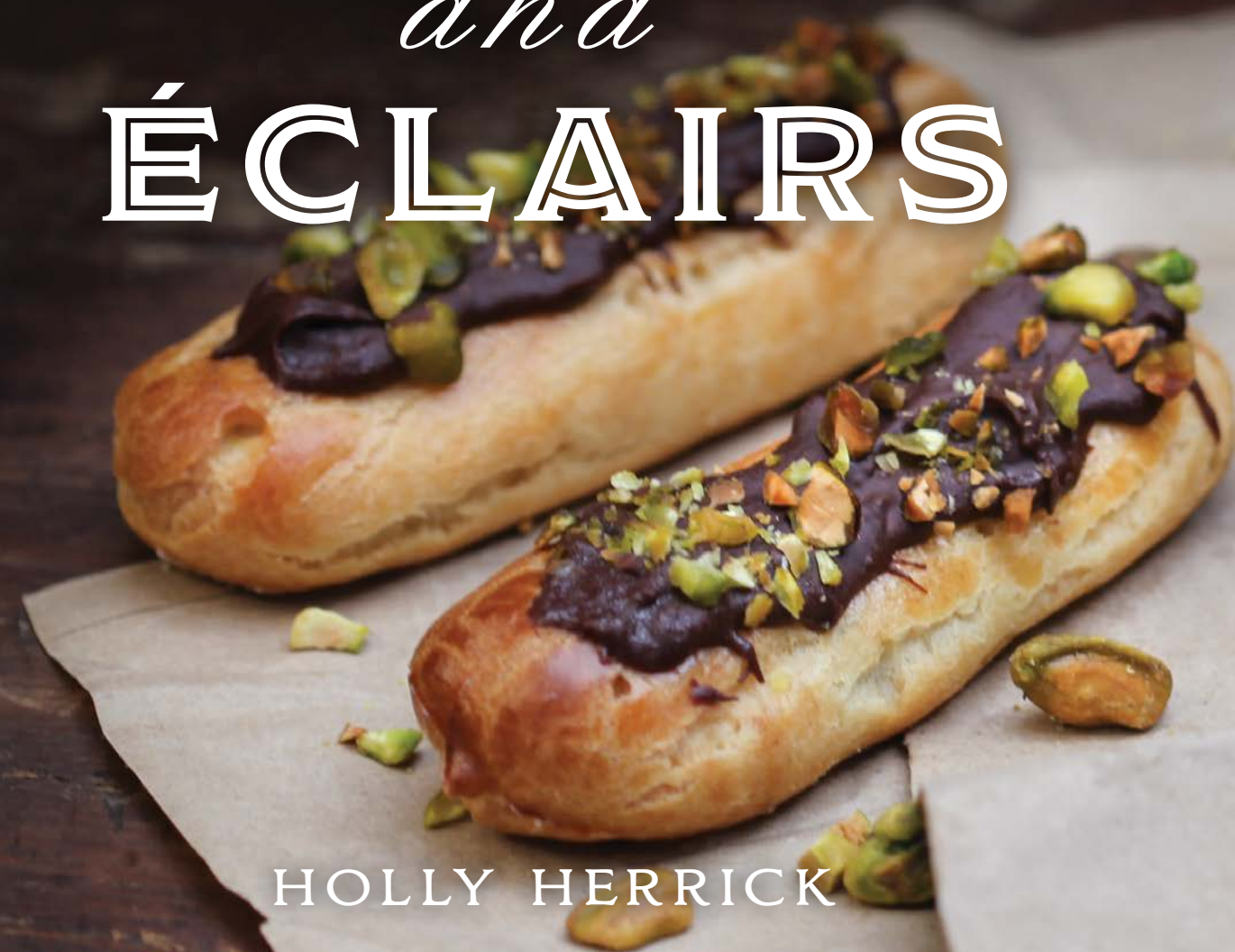
CREAM PUFFS & ÉCLAIRS

Learn the glorified (but deceptively simple) French baker's art of making choux pastry at home. The dough is impressively flexible and can be formed into all kinds of shapes, from the classic cream puff and éclair, to pastry rings and even gnocchi.

Holly Herrick explains the technique in easy-to-understand language as she guides you through the steps of perfecting the choux "puff" and then filling it with a vast array of both sweet and savory make-ahead fillings ideally suited to fast, easy and elegant entertaining. Cheese Puffs with Three Cheeses and Pepper, Pâté and Prunes on Savory Choux Rings, Profiteroles with Salted Caramel Macadamia Nut Ice Cream, and Creamsicle Cream Puffs with Hot Chocolate Sauce are just some of the 60-plus recipes you can expect to master and enjoy. Put on your baker's hat and come along!

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CREAM PUFFS and ÉCLAIRS



HOLLY HERRICK

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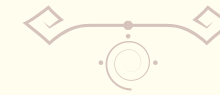


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

HOLLY HERRICK is a graduate of Le Cordon Bleu, Paris, and holds a Grande Diplome in both pastry and cuisine. A long-standing, nationally awarded food writer, culinary instructor, and former resident of France, her personalized approach to practical, delicious cooking is her trademark. She resides in Charleston, SC. Visit her at hollyherrick.com.



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LES NUAGE REVEUSE AUX CREAMSICLE ORANGE

Dreamy Orange Creamsicle Puffs

(YIELDS 24 – 30 PETIT CHOUX OR 12–14 GROS CHOUX)



Ooh la la! These are indeed dreamy treats. Whipped cream, lightly infused with bright orange flavoring is a dead ringer for an orange Creamsicle. Served cold on a bed of hot chocolate sauce, they move the soul into the next dimension—they are that delicious and delightfully easy to prepare. The cream filling, lightly tinged with orange is so pretty, it's best just to plop it into the center of the choux (both big and small work well) so everyone can see it. They're best served filled and lightly frozen, so the cream sets up nicely and the cold contrasts well with the hot sauce. They can be made ahead and frozen overnight (covered) and served the next day. Be sure to take them out of the freezer for 30 minutes before serving. If you can find orange-tinted granulated sugar (in the baking aisle), it makes a "tres jolie" finish on top of the royal icing.

1 Master Recipe Sweet Choux Pastry (page 20)

3 tablespoons fresh (don't substitute concentrate!)
orange juice, reduced down to 1 teaspoon

1 cup cold whipping cream

Zest of 1 orange, finely chopped (about 1 teaspoon)

1/4 teaspoon orange extract

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/4 cup powdered sugar

Reserved reduced orange juice

For the royal icing:

1/4 cup powdered sugar

1/4 teaspoon orange extract

2 tablespoons heavy cream

Garnish orange colored granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Prepare, pipe and bake the pastry according to directions for gros choux (page 19) or petit choux (page 20). Cool the choux on cooling racks, piercing each gently in the bottom to allow steam to escape. Prepare the filling. In a small saucepan, reduce the orange juice to one teaspoon over high heat, 1–2 minutes. Turn out into a small bowl and refrigerate to cool. In a large, cold bowl, combine the remaining filling ingredients, including the cooled, reserved teaspoon of orange juice. Using a blender, blend on medium speed until the cream is whipped to firm peaks. Separately, prepare the royal icing by stirring together the ingredients in a small bowl until smooth and incorporated. To fill the choux, cut each in half horizontally. Plop a heaping teaspoon (petit) or a heaping 1 1/2 tablespoons (gros) in the center of each. Top each gently with their respective choux cap, trying not to press down too firmly on the whipped cream. Glaze each lightly using the tip of your finger or the back of a teaspoon with the royal icing. Top with a pinch of the orange sugar. Freeze for at least 30 minutes before serving to set up the cream.



LES NUAGES AUX CRÈME PATISSIÈRE ORANGES-SANG ET GANACHE SALEE

Blood Orange Pastry Cream Puffs with Ganache and Maple Salt

(YIELDS 24–30 PETIT CHOUX OR 12–14 GROS CHOUX)



Blood oranges are exquisite fruits. So named because of their dark red flesh, they are easily found during winter months at most grocery stores. If they are unavailable, substitute another fresh sweet orange juice, such as tangerine or navel. In this recipe, the fresh juice is reduced to a glaze and folded into the pastry cream, giving it an exotic color and flavor. As in the preceding recipes, the puffs are topped with a semi-firm hot chocolate sauce, which works magic with the delicate orange flavor of the pastry cream. A pinch of seasoned maple salt on top of each adds a pleasant savory/salty finish and delightful crunch. Maple salt is readily available at most specialty spice shops. If you can't find it, simply substitute coarse sea salt or kosher salt.

1 Master Recipe Sweet Choux Pastry (page 20)

1 Master Recipe Pastry Cream (page 21)

Zest of 2 blood oranges, finely chopped

1/2 cup fresh blood orange juice reduced to 1
tablespoon over medium high heat in a small
saucepan and cooled to room temperature

1/4 teaspoon orange extract

1/2 Master Recipe Ganache/Hot Chocolate Sauce
(page 22)

1 teaspoon coarse maple salt

Preheat oven to 425 F.

Prepare, pipe and bake the pastry according to directions (page 20).

Prepare the pastry cream, stirring in the zest and cooled reduced juice after the pastry cream is strained—at the same time you add the vanilla. Stir to incorporate. Chill for at least 1 hour.

To fill the choux, pipe 1 teaspoon pastry cream for petit choux or 1 tablespoon gros choux, using a #802 pastry tip.

Prepare the ganache and cool at room temperature for 1 hour before garnishing so that it has had time to set up to the “drizzle” stage. Drizzle 1 teaspoon over petit choux and 1 tablespoon over gros choux. Sprinkle a pinch of salt in the center of each cream puff. Chill for up to 3 hours before serving.

Suggested sauce pairings: Crème Anglaise (page 50), Sweetened Cream Sauce (page 51) or make a full recipe of the ganache (page 52) and heat gently over low heat to serve warm.

GOUGERES AUX POIVRE NOIR ET TROIS FROMAGE

Cheese Puffs with Black Pepper and Three Cheeses

Five things in life can beat a warm, crumbly cheese puff (known as gougères, pronounced goo-jair in French), fresh out of the oven. This recipe includes a bit of freshly ground black pepper for kick (optional) and a blend of aged white cheddar, Gruyère and Parmesan cheeses which is blended into the warm choux and melted just before piping and baking. Or, serve them as a warm variation on bread alongside a green salad to start a meal. Larger choux are delightful as delicate sandwiches (see variation suggestions in follow). Especially handy because of the choux, these puffs freeze very well and reheat in a snap for instant entertaining.

1 Master Recipe Savory Choux Pastry (page 20)

1 teaspoon ground black pepper

1/2 cup grated aged white cheddar cheese

1/2 cup grated Gruyère cheese (or substitute Swiss)

3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Prepare Master Recipe Savory Choux Pastry (page 20). While still warm, stir in the ground pepper, cheddar, Gruyère and Parmesan. Blend with a wooden spoon until just melted. Pipe according to Piping Size How-To for petit choux (page 19) or, if desired, according to Piping Size How-To for gros choux (page 19) onto lined baking sheet. Brush each choux lightly with egg wash. Bake the petit choux for 20–25 minutes, and the gros choux for 35 minutes, or until puffed and golden brown. Turn off the oven, open the door, and let the pastry stand for 5 minutes. Pierce the bottom of each choux gently with the tip of a knife. Reserve warm and serve.

VARIATION: Sprinkle the warm petit choux whole, with freshly chopped chives or another fresh herb, such as rosemary. Or, for cheese puff sandwiches, half-horizontally and fill with a dollop of mayonnaise and small spears of roasted asparagus, fresh arugula tossed with a bit of lemon juice and olive oil, or a layer of crisp bacon and thinly sliced tomato. Use the photo of the ring.

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