

CHOCOLATE ECLAIRS

Organise a bake sale and turn your eclairs into cash, cash, cash!

Possibly everyone's top teatime pleasure, eclairs are a bit of work but so worth it. Just picture yourself biting into that beautiful choux pastry filled with cream and spread with chocolate.

INGREDIENTS

(Makes about 8-12 eclairs)

Choux pastry

115g plain flour
100g butter
2 tsp caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
pinch of salt
3 eggs, well beaten
1 tbsp icing sugar

Filling

300ml double cream
1 tbsp icing sugar
½ tsp vanilla extract

Chocolate glaze

100g dark chocolate
(or 50g dark chocolate
and 50g milk chocolate)
50g whipping cream
50g butter
25g golden syrup



The Hairy Bikers' Ultimate Comfort Food by Si King and Dave Myers is published by Seven Dials in hardback at £25



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DAY

FRIDAY 15 MARCH

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/Fan 160°C/ Gas 4 and line 2 baking trays with baking parchment. Sift the flour on to another piece of baking parchment.
 2. Put the butter, sugar, and vanilla extract in a pan with 225ml of water and a generous pinch of salt. Heat gently until the butter has melted and the sugar has dissolved, then turn up the heat until the mixture is boiling. Remove the pan from the heat.
 3. Pull up the sides of the baking parchment and slide the flour into the butter and sugar mixture. Stir the flour into the wet ingredients to form a thick paste which should come away from the sides of the pan in one solid mass. Put the pan back over a gentle heat and continue stirring with a wooden spoon for 2 or 3 minutes, until the mixture is slightly steaming and leaves a floury residue on the base of the pan.
 4. Leave to cool for a couple of minutes, then beat for a couple of minutes more. You can then transfer the dough to a stand mixer or use electric beaters if you prefer. You will see steam escape from the dough at this point. Keep beating until the steam escaping the dough has subsided.
 5. Gradually work in the eggs, just a couple of tablespoons at a time, until you have a thick glossy dough – it needs to be quite stiff and firm enough for you to draw your finger through it without the sides falling back in. The dough initially breaks up a lot, but eventually it will come together again.
 6. Fit a large star or plain round nozzle into a piping bag and scoop the dough into the bag. If you don't have a nozzle, simply snip off the end of the bag off – the hole should be about 2.5cm wide.
 7. Pipe tiny amounts of the dough under the corners of the baking parchment on the trays to keep the parchment in place.
- For large eclairs, pipe 8 lines of 15cm long dough, as evenly as possible, on to the baking trays, making each one about 15cm long. To make sure they don't spread to an oval shape, pipe them slightly wider at each end. To make slightly smaller eclairs, pipe 12 lines of about 10 centimetres long. Wet your fingers and smooth out the ends of the eclairs if peaks have formed. If you haven't used a star nozzle, run a fork along the length of each one.
8. Dust the eclairs with the icing sugar – this will help them darken and crisp up in the oven. Bake for 25 minutes by which time they should have formed a crust. Use a skewer to poke holes in each end of the eclairs so steam can escape from their centres, then continue to bake for another 8–10 minutes. Turn the oven off and leave the door ajar. Leave the eclairs in the oven for about half an hour – this will help make sure they are crisp all the way through.
 9. To make the filling, whip the cream until it is stiff, then fold in the icing sugar and vanilla extract. Chill for half an hour.
 10. For the glaze, put the chocolate, cream, butter and golden syrup into a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. Melt together gently to make a fairly thin ganache.
 11. To fill the eclairs, cut 3 holes in the base of each one. Fill a piping bag with the cream and pipe it into the holes. Squeeze the eclairs lightly – they should feel nicely full. Dip each filled éclair in the chocolate glaze – this gives a much better coverage than trying to spread it – then leave them in the fridge to set. These are best eaten on the same day they are made as the pastry will eventually soften, but they will keep for up to 48 hours.

For cake labels, bunting and more go to comicrelief.com/fundraising

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