



PÂTISSERIE *Maison*

SIMPLE PASTRIES AND DESSERTS TO MAKE AT HOME



RICHARD BERTINET

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About the book

FROM THE AUTHOR OF PASTRY, A BRAND-NEW, ACCESSIBLE GUIDE TO MAKING AUTHENTIC PATISSERIE AND DESSERTS AT HOME.

Many novices as well as experienced cooks want to take their pastry skills one step further. The art of patisserie is now yours to master under the expert guidance of Richard Bertinet.

In *Patisserie Maison* Richard takes you through basic techniques, covering the classics of the patisserie counter. With over 50 easy-to-follow recipes, including Almond éclairs, Gâteau St Honoré, Rum baba, Paris Brest, Chocolate meringue tart and Blackcurrant mousse, and step-by-step photographs, this book opens up the world of divine sweet creations.

Originally trained as a baker in Brittany, Richard has over 20 years' experience in the kitchen, baking, consulting and teaching. In 2005 he set up The Bertinet Kitchen cookery school in Bath, which now attracts people from all over the world to participate in his classes. His first book, *Dough*, was awarded The Guild of Food Writers Award for Best First Book, the Julia Child Award for the Best First Book and the James Beard Award for Best Book Baking and Desserts. *Patisserie Maison* is his fifth book.



About the author

Originally from Brittany, France, Richard Bertinet trained as a baker from the age of fourteen. Having moved to the UK in the 1980s, he is now very much an Anglophile.

With twenty years' experience in the kitchen, baking, consulting and teaching, Richard moved to Bath in 2005 to open The Bertinet Kitchen cookery school. The school attracts people from all over the world to participate in Richard's classes and has been highly praised, including recognition by US *Gourmet* magazine and the television series *Adventures with Ruth* [Reichl], in which it featured as one of the best cookery schools in the world.

As well as instilling passion through his teaching, Richard works as a consultant for major manufacturers developing speciality products throughout the industry.

The Bertinet Bakery started life as a weekly pop-up shop above the cookery school in 2007 but has grown to a much larger affair, producing breads and pastries for restaurants, hotels and food stores in the South West. It also supplies the bakery's own shops in Bath, with more to come further afield. The bakery's signature sourdough loaf was the winner of the Soil Association's award for Best Baked Good in 2010 and 2011.

Richard's first book, *Dough*, received a host of accolades, including the Guild of Food Writers' Best First Book Award, the Julia Child Award for Best First Book, a James Beard Award for Best Book Baking & Desserts and the International Association of Culinary Professionals Cookery Book of the Year Award. His second book, *Crust*, was also published to critical acclaim and received a World Gourmand Award. His third book, *COOK*, focused on many

of the dishes taught at the cookery school. His most recent book, *Pastry*, was published in 2012.

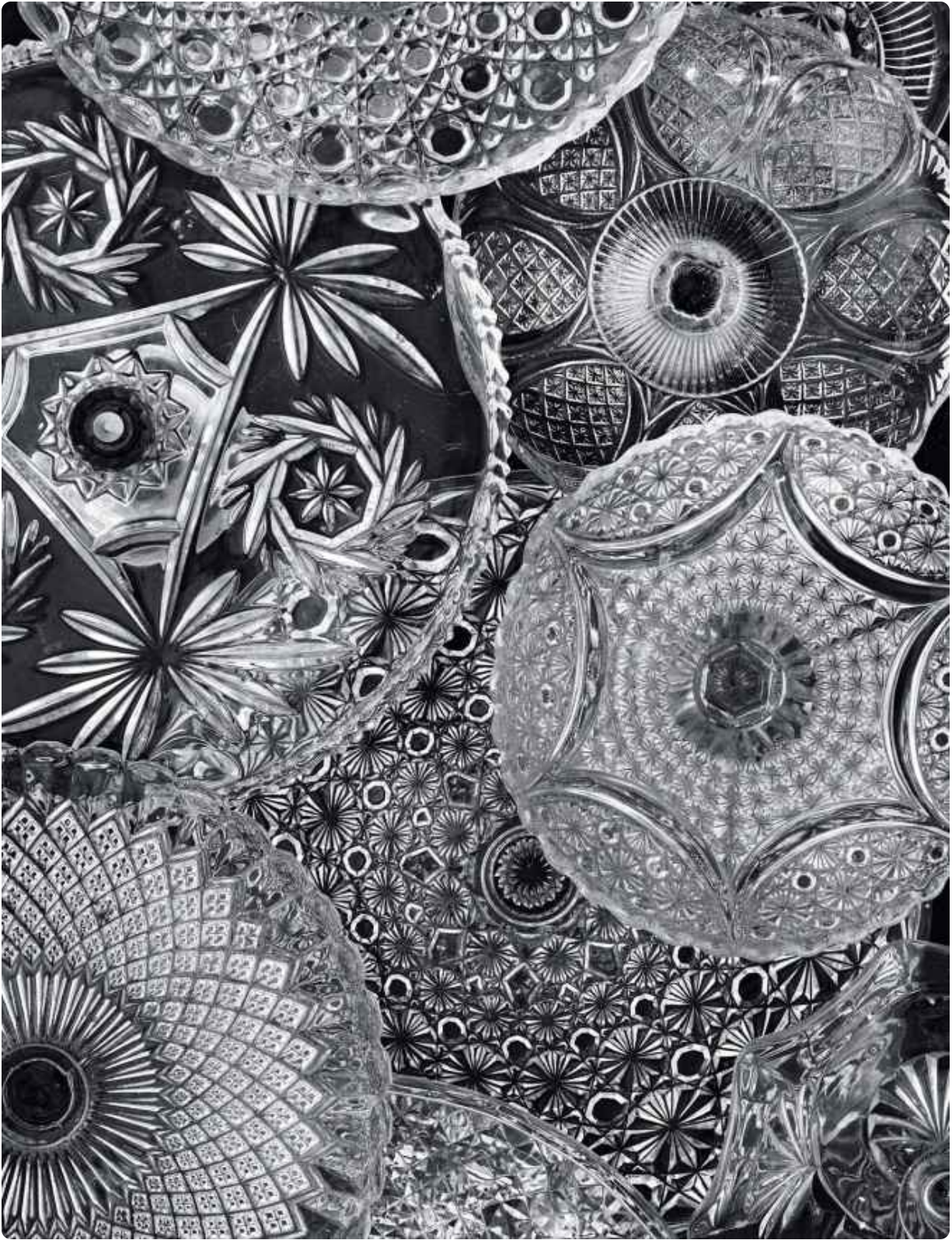
Richard was named BBC Food Champion of the Year 2010 at the BBC Food & Farming Awards. For more information about Richard, The Bertinet Kitchen and The Bertinet Bakery, visit www.bertinet.com.

PÂTISSERIE *Maison*

RICHARD BERTINET



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Introduction

When I began my apprenticeship in Brittany I had the choice of training as a baker, patissier or chocolatier. In France each one is a distinct profession with its own set of qualifications. Even though I knew that at heart I was a baker, I was always fascinated to know what my friends the patissiers were up to in the next room. Because bakers start work at two in the morning and finish at about midday, I was able to put in a double shift helping them out with the tarts and genoise sponges.

From being covered in flour and working with simple ingredients in the serenity of the bakery, where I had only one other person for company, it was such a contrast to be in the frenetic atmosphere of the patisserie, where half a dozen people seemed to do a thousand things at once. Whisks were constantly on the go and there would be fruit, cream, chocolate and sugar everywhere, and so much more washing up than in the bakery! Sunday was always the busiest day, when everyone came in to buy their desserts for Sunday lunch.

The very finest patissiers, who have risen to the top of their profession, are phenomenal artists, incredibly skilled and dedicated to the art of construction and perfect presentation – but I want to show you that at a simpler level you can still achieve great-tasting and great-looking patisserie. The recipes in this book are a mix of those that we teach in our cookery school in Bath, and the kind of thing that you would find in a small boulangerie-patisserie in France. They are what I call patisserie ‘maison’: simple tarts, mousses, meringues and pastries that you can make in your own kitchen with little experience. I have tried to keep the ingredients accessible, and the techniques as simple as possible, using only basic equipment.

Most of the recipes rely on a combination of classic base recipes: genoise sponge, sweet pastry, meringue, a selection of creams and syrups, chocolate

ganache, and so on. The key to making life easy is to be forward thinking and organised. When you make a sponge or pastry, for example, make double, triple or quadruple the quantity and put what you don't need immediately into the freezer. And read the recipes through first, as sometimes, especially when you are working with mousses, glazes or jellies, you will have to set each layer in the fridge before you can move on to the next. So, although a recipe might not be complicated, it might mean you need to start making it the day before you want to serve it.

We all taste with our eyes before we even put food into our mouths, so I have given a few ideas on simple, smart presentation. Sometimes just a minimal dusting of cocoa powder over a chocolate glaze, a thread of coffee run through a meringue, or a cleverly piped cream inside an éclair can make the difference between ordinary and eye-catching.

Most of all, I hope that once you get to grips with the various techniques, you will have the confidence to personalise the recipes by experimenting with different combinations of flavours, textures and decorations – and just have fun.





Basics

Recipe List

Genoise sponge

Variations

Choux pastry

Sweet pastry

Meringue

Creams

Caramelised nuts

Raspberry jam

Strawberry jam

Lemon curd

Drying fruit

Decorating with cocoa powder and chocolate

Piping creams

Genoise sponge



A good genoise sponge is one of the fundamentals of patisserie. You will find a layer of plain or chocolate sponge being used in many of the recipes in this book, such as Tiramisu (see [here](#)), Fraisier (see [here](#)), and the Blackcurrant and Passion Fruit Mousses [here](#) and [here](#). I suggest you bake a few trays at a time and freeze what you are not using immediately, ready to defrost when you need it. The quantity below will make enough for two shallow (2cm) rectangular sponges baked in a tray approximately 35cm × 27cm.

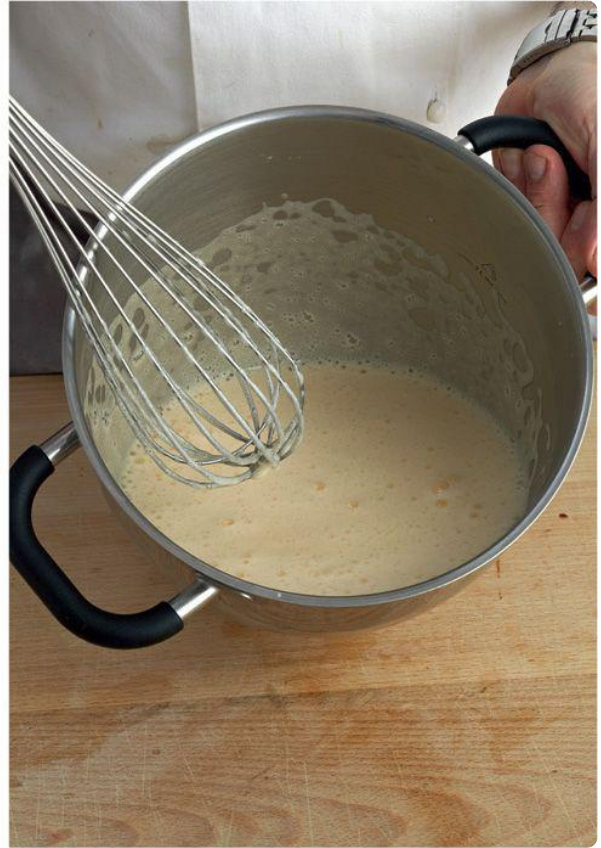
You could also use this recipe to make one 21cm round or equivalent square cake (7cm deep), which will need around 20 minutes in the oven until it is golden and springs back if you touch it gently in the centre. A skewer inserted into the middle should come away clean.

Once the cake has baked and cooled, you could simply halve it horizontally, brush each cut surface with sugar syrup flavoured with a dash of kirsch (see [here](#)) then sandwich the two halves together with whipped double cream or crème Chantilly (see [here](#)) and fresh raspberries or strawberries. Finish with a dusting of icing sugar on top.

125g caster sugar
4 medium eggs
125g plain flour, sifted
25g butter, melted
a little butter for greasing the tin

Grease two 35cm × 27cm × 2cm baking trays with a little butter and then line them with baking paper.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4.



Put the sugar and eggs in a bowl (use the bowl of your food mixer if you have one), and stir with a whisk, then put the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water (don't let the base of the bowl touch the water).

Whisk for about 3–4 minutes, until the mixture is foamy and has tripled in size.



Transfer to a food mixer with a whisk attachment, or use a hand-held one, and whisk at high speed for about 4–5 minutes until the mixture has cooled down and clings easily to the whisk, which will leave ribbon patterns in the mixture as you lift it.

Very gently fold in the flour a little at a time with a metal spoon – you want to keep as much air in the mixture as possible.



Then, again very gently, fold in the melted butter.

With a spoon, turn the mixture into your trays and tilt it so that it spreads into the corners.

Bake in the preheated oven for 12–15 minutes until golden and the centre is springy to the touch. With shallow tray sponges like this you can tell easily when they are done, so there is no real need to do the skewer test – though you can, if you prefer.

When the sponge is baked, turn out onto a cooling rack. Now the sponge is ready to use in your chosen recipe. Or to freeze, leave the sponge on its greaseproof paper, put another layer on top, and wrap well in clingfilm before putting into the freezer, where it will keep for around three months.

Variations:



For chocolate genoise

sieve 1 tablespoon of cocoa powder with the flour.

For coffee genoise

sieve 1 tablespoon of very fine instant ground coffee with the flour.

For vanilla genoise

add either 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract, 1 teaspoon of vanilla bean paste, or the seeds of one vanilla pod to the mixture with the egg and sugar.

For orange genoise

add the grated zest of one orange, and a drop of orange essence or orange flower essence to the mixture before folding in the flour.

For lemon genoise

add the grated zest of one lemon and a drop of lemon essence to the mixture before folding in the flour.



Choux pastry



Choux is so fashionable – in every pastry class we run at the cookery school it is the technique that most people want to learn. It is the great versatile classic that any apprentice patissier must master, and the more often you make it the easier it will become. Don't be afraid to double or even quadruple the recipe below, pipe it into different shapes from round buns to little éclairs, bake them and then keep them in the freezer, to bring out any time you need a last-minute dessert.

This recipe makes around 500g of dough, enough for the Paris Brest [here](#), éclairs [here](#) and Gâteau St Honoré [here](#). For the Croque en Bouche [here](#) – the festive tower of choux buns – you will need to triple the quantity. One quantity of dough can be made easily by hand; however, if you are making bigger quantities, I suggest you use a food mixer with a paddle attachment.

MAKES 500G

125g plain flour
4 medium eggs
225ml water
60g butter
½ teaspoon salt



Sieve the flour into a bowl and have the eggs ready in another bowl.

Bring the water, butter and salt to the boil in a large pan.

Tip in the flour, whisking all the time.



Continue whisking until the mixture clings to the whisk and resembles mashed potato.

Swap the whisk for a wooden spoon and beat over the heat for 2–3 minutes until the mixture is glossy and comes away from the edges of the pan cleanly. Then, if using a food mixer with a paddle attachment, transfer the mixture to the bowl now, otherwise leave the mixture in the pan and take the pan off the heat.



Add the eggs, one by one, either beating them in by hand or with the motor running. Whether mixing by hand or by machine, go carefully with the eggs. Add them one at a time, making sure each one is well incorporated before adding the next. Before you add the last one, check the texture. You are aiming for a mixture that is smooth and glossy but that will hold its shape for piping (it is better to be slightly too stiff than too runny). If it is almost at this stage you might not need to add all of the last egg.

Now the dough is ready to use.

Piping choux pastry

One of the things I am asked about most in my classes is how to fill a piping bag cleanly, whether for piping choux pastry, cream or icing. The best way to

do it is to turn the bag inside out over one hand and, with the other hand, fill it half full only. This helps to stop the mixture smearing over the outside of the bag as you fill it. Pull up the sides of the bag and twist the top so that the mixture is forced down towards the nozzle.

To pipe, hold the bag in one hand, with the other hand underneath to steady and guide it. Squeeze with the hand that is holding the bag, pipe, then turn the bag anticlockwise, squeeze again, applying the same pressure all the time, and pipe again.



A note about baking choux pastry

When you bake choux pastry, the heat of the oven causes the pastry to expand and become hollow inside. The trick to keeping choux buns, éclairs, and so on, puffed up and crispy so that they don't deflate (crucial for something like

the Croque en Bouche [here](#)) is to dry out the pastry well during baking. Don't be scared of leaving them in the oven longer than you might expect. I have seen recipes that suggest taking out éclairs and buns halfway through baking, then making a little hole in the base for the air to escape, before putting them back in. I think a better way is to mimic what happens in a professional bakery, where you can press a button and allow steam to escape from the oven. You can do this quite simply by leaving the door of your oven open just a little for the last few minutes of baking.



Sweet pastry



Some of the recipes use sweet pastry as a base. Although you can mix it by machine (see [here](#)), it is such a quick and easy process that I suggest you do it by hand, especially if you are new to making pastry as this helps you to get the feel of what you are looking for in terms of texture.

The pastry will keep for up to a week in the fridge and up to three months in the freezer, so it makes sense to make at least double the quantity and then freeze what you don't need immediately. A good tip to stop the pastry from discolouring slightly in the freezer is to add a couple of drops of lemon juice or vinegar to the dough during mixing – you won't taste it in the pastry.

I wrap pastry for the freezer in greaseproof paper, followed by a tight layer of clingfilm. When you take out the pastry and defrost it ready to use, you will find that it is beautifully easy to roll.

MAKES 360G

175g plain flour
pinch of salt
60g sugar
1 medium egg, plus 1 medium yolk
60g butter

Put the flour and salt in a mixing bowl. Have the sugar in a separate bowl and break your eggs into yet another bowl – there is no need to beat them.



The key to good pastry is to keep the butter very cold but still soft and pliable. I leave the butter in the fridge until I am ready to use it, then put it between two pieces of greaseproof paper and bash it with a rolling pin until it is about 1cm thick.

Put the whole piece of butter into the bowl of flour so that it is well covered, then tear it into large pieces and rub into the flour, with as light a touch as possible. The way to achieve this is to keep the pieces of butter constantly covered in flour, as you repeatedly scoop them up in both hands and just flick your thumbs over them in a soft skimming motion, as if you were dealing a pack of cards. Don't press or grind the butter or it can become clumpy.

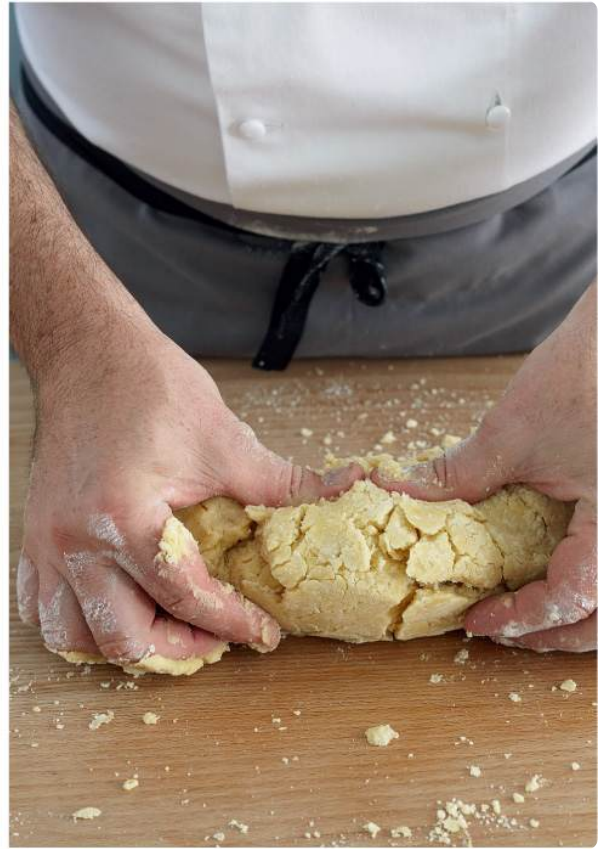


Recipes often say to rub the mixture until it looks like breadcrumbs, but I find that people often overdo it trying to achieve this, and end up with pastry that is quite sticky and difficult to handle. Instead, I always say to stop when the shards of butter are still the size of your little fingernail.

Add the sugar, mixing it in evenly.

Tip the egg and yolk into the flour and butter and mix everything together.

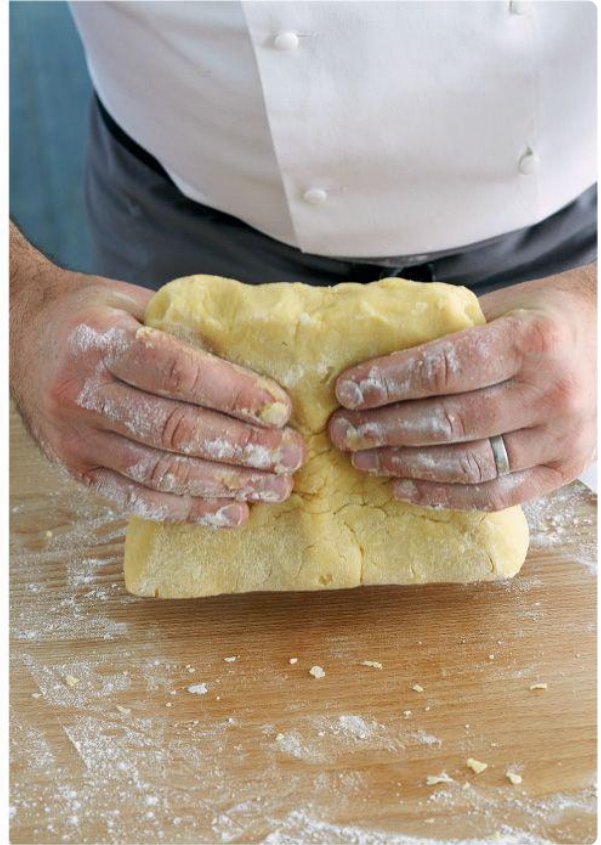
(N.B. the pictures show double the quantity being made)



You can use a spoon, but I always use one of the little plastic scrapers that I have for bread making, as it is easy to run it around the edge of the bowl, pulling the mixture into the centre until it forms a very rough dough, that ideally shouldn't be sticky.

Press down on the dough with your thumbs, then turn it clockwise a few degrees and press down again. Repeat this a few times.

Now turn the pastry out onto a work surface. If it isn't sticky, you don't need to flour your work surface, but if you do, just very lightly skim it with the finest film of flour as you are going to work the pastry very briefly and any extra flour that goes in at this stage will make it heavier. Holding the dough with both hands, press down again gently with your thumbs and then turn the dough clockwise a few degrees, as before. Repeat this four or five times.



Finally fold the pastry over itself and press down with your fingertips. Repeat this a couple of times until the dough is like plasticine and looks even and homogeneous.

Pick up the piece of pastry and tap each side on the work surface to square it off so that when you come to roll it, you are starting off with a good shape, rather than with raggedy edges.

To make the sweet pastry by machine

WITH A MIXER: use a paddle attachment. Before putting the cold butter in the machine, bash it with a rolling pin, as on [here](#), then break it into four or five pieces. Put it into the mixer with the flour and salt and mix at a slow speed until the pieces of butter are about the size of your little fingernail. Stir in the

sugar. You will need to scrape the butter from the paddle a few times, as it will stick. Add the egg and mix very briefly until a dough forms. As soon as it does, turn it out onto your work surface with the help of your scraper and follow the rest of the method [here](#)–[here](#).

WITH A FOOD PROCESSOR: go carefully, as it is very easy to over-process pastry. Take the butter straight from the fridge and cut it into small dice, then put it into the bowl with the flour and salt. Use the pulse button, in short bursts, so that the flour just lifts and mixes, rather than whizzes into a greasy ball that will result in dense, tense pastry. Add the sugar and pulse in the same way. Add the egg and again just press the pulse button briefly until the pastry dough comes together. Turn it out with the help of your scraper and follow the rest of the method [here](#)–[here](#).

Resting the pastry

Wrap the dough in greaseproof paper rather than clingfilm (as this will make it sweaty) and put it into the fridge for at least an hour, preferably two, or better still, overnight. The point of resting the dough is to allow the gluten in the flour to relax, so that the dough becomes more elastic and easier to roll. This also helps to stop it shrinking when it goes in the oven.

If you are in a hurry to use the pastry, flatten it by half with a rolling pin before wrapping it in greaseproof paper. This will help it to chill more quickly. Or you can put it into the freezer for 15–30 minutes.



Sweet pastry

Meringue



The two most widely used styles of meringue are French and Italian. French meringue, which is the one most people are familiar with, is made by whisking egg whites and then adding sugar and continuing to whisk until the mixture forms stiff peaks. The Italian recipe is made with a hot sugar syrup, rather than sugar, and people tend to shy away from it, thinking it is harder to make – but if you use a sugar thermometer to take the syrup to just the right point, the rest is straightforward.

You can see the difference between the consistency of the two different styles in the photograph [here](#): on the whisk the French meringue (on the left) is more compact and dry, whereas the Italian meringue is more ‘stringy’ with a glossy, silky shine to it.

I generally prefer the Italian-style meringue because it is more versatile to work with, and while it is firm on the outside, it retains a wonderful gooey softness in the centre, whereas French meringue is light, but a little drier and more brittle. However, it really is an individual choice, and though I have suggested Italian meringue in the recipes, you can substitute French meringue if you prefer.

The quantities I have given for each style will make around six big individual meringues, or one tart case, which you can use for the recipe for Chocolate Meringue Tart [here](#), or simply fill with Chantilly cream (see [here](#)) and fresh fruit.

Working with sugar

Some of the recipes in this book involve sugar syrups or caramel, which are really only about boiling sugar and water, but to different stages. I know from my classes that people find the idea of working with sugar daunting, usually because they have come across terms like thread, soft ball and hard ball, soft crack and hard crack, so I have deliberately kept things simple.

Most of the sugar syrups are simply equal quantities of sugar and water boiled until the sugar dissolves and you have a colourless syrup that can be flavoured with an alcohol such as rum or kirsch. I use these syrups for brushing over genoise sponge, to keep it moist and infuse it with extra flavour, when I am using it as a layer with various creams and fruit.

A slightly more dense sugar syrup, made with less water, and some glucose added to the sugar, is needed for making Italian meringue (see [here](#)) and for this and the few recipes that require caramel, the way to make your life easy is to invest in a sugar thermometer. These are inexpensive, and the best are those with digital displays that you can pre-set to a certain temperature and just wait for them to bleep when it is reached. I use mine for much more than working with sugar – for anything that I want temperature-controlled, for example deep frying.



Meringue

Italian meringue

MAKES 6 LARGE INDIVIDUAL MERINGUES OR 1 TART CASE

190g sugar
45ml water
20ml liquid glucose
3 medium egg whites

Put the sugar in a pan with the water and heat gently for about 5–8 minutes until the sugar has dissolved and formed a colourless syrup, and small bubbles are breaking the surface. The syrup is ready when the temperature reaches 121/122°C maximum, so I always set my thermometer to 122°C.

Now you are ready to whisk your egg whites. You can do this using a food mixer with a whisk attachment, or a hand-held whisk, but whichever you use, make sure your bowl is absolutely clean and dry, as water or grease can prevent the egg white from stiffening. Whisk the egg whites until soft foamy peaks form, then stop as soon as you reach this point, as if you over-whisk, the air bubbles that you have created will burst and the egg whites will collapse back into liquid.

Next you are going to pour the hot syrup onto the egg whites. Since you need both hands free – one to whisk, one to pour – if you are whisking by hand, then before you start, wrap a tea towel around your bowl and wedge it into an empty saucepan to hold it steady.

Pour the syrup in a slow, steady stream, whisking continuously until the meringue has cooled down to room temperature, and is silky and glossy.

Now the meringue is ready to use according to your recipe.



French meringue

MAKES 6 LARGE INDIVIDUAL MERINGUES OR 1 TART CASE

4 medium egg whites

125g caster sugar

125g icing sugar

Whether you use a food mixer with a whisk attachment, or a hand-held whisk, make sure your bowl is absolutely clean and dry, as any water or grease can prevent the egg white from stiffening. Whisk the egg whites and caster sugar until soft foamy peaks form, then stop as soon as you reach this point, as if you over-whisk, the egg whites will become liquid and you will have to start again.

Before you add the icing sugar, if you are whisking by hand, wrap a tea towel around your bowl and wedge it into an empty saucepan to hold it steady. You need both hands free – one to whisk, one to sieve in the sugar.

Sieve in the icing sugar slowly, whisking continuously until the mixture forms firm, shiny peaks.

Now the meringue is ready to use according to your recipe.



French meringue

Creams



These are all the creams that we use throughout the recipes in this book and in our bakery. They are very versatile and some are actually a combination of two different creams, brought together to give different textures and flavours. They are also interchangeable, so if you like, you can substitute a simple cream for a more complex one and vice versa. Flavourings such as chocolate can be added (see overleaf).

Crème pâtissière

The all-purpose pastry cream is really a thickened custard, which can be used in any number of confections and desserts, from a filling for éclairs to a base for fruit tarts. You can use semi-skimmed milk if you prefer.

MAKES ABOUT 400G

250ml whole milk
1 vanilla pod
3 medium egg yolks
60g caster sugar
25g plain flour

Pour the milk into a heavy-bottomed pan. Lay the vanilla pod on a chopping board and slice along its length with a sharp knife. Open out and scrape the seeds into the milk, then put the halved pods in too.

Put the eggs and sugar into a bowl and whisk until pale and creamy. Add the flour and mix until smooth.

Put the pan of milk over a medium heat, bring to just under the boil, take off the heat and slowly pour half of it into the egg, sugar and flour mixture, whisking well as you do so. Add the remainder of the milk and whisk in well, then pour the mixture back into the pan.

Bring to the boil, whisking all the time, then keep boiling and whisking for 1 minute, take off the heat and pour into a clean bowl.

Scoop out the halves of the vanilla pod. You can wash and dry them and keep them in a jar of sugar, which will give you vanilla-flavoured sugar for use in all your baking. Cover the surface of the bowl with greaseproof paper straight away, as this will help to prevent a skin from forming. Cool and then keep in the fridge until ready to use.

FOR COFFEE CRÈME PÂTISSIÈRE: add 1 tablespoon of good ground coffee to the milk and then follow the recipe as usual.

FOR CHOCOLATE CRÈME PÂTISSIÈRE: add 3 teaspoons of cocoa powder to the milk and then follow the recipe as usual. Alternatively, you can use 75g of dark, milk or white chocolate chips.

Crème Chantilly

Probably the quickest, most simple and versatile cream of them all – it is nice and light for filling éclairs, or simply to serve with any tart or ice cream. You can perfume it with a few drops of rosewater or orange water instead of the vanilla extract if you prefer.

MAKES ABOUT 300G

250ml whipping or double cream
2 tablespoons caster sugar

a few drops of vanilla extract or paste

Whisk the ingredients together until thick, but don't over-whisk, or the cream will turn to butter!

Crème au beurre

This is simply crème pâtissière with butter added – the advantage of this is that the butter sets the cream quite firmly, so it is good in recipes where you need the cream to hold its shape.

MAKES ABOUT 300G

200g cold crème pâtissière (see [here](#))

100g butter, cut into pieces and allowed to become very soft

Take your cold crème pâtissière from the fridge and whisk it until it has the consistency of a light mayonnaise, then whisk in the pieces of butter a little at a time until the cream is smooth and has turned quite white.

Crème légère

This is a beautiful cream and my favourite. It is lighter than crème au beurre, but more substantial than Chantilly, and I always think it has the flavour of a great vanilla ice cream, but without being frozen. You could use it as an alternative to crème au beurre for the Fraisier [here](#), for filling éclairs, or simply to fill a sweet pastry tart case and then top it with fresh fruit.

MAKES ABOUT 300G

200g cold crème pâtissière (see [here](#))

100ml double cream

Take your cold crème pâtissière from the fridge and whisk it until it has the consistency of a light mayonnaise.

Whisk the double cream until thick and fluffy then fold into the crème pâtissière.

Crème anglaise

We use this for the Îles Flottantes [here](#) and the jelly [here](#), but you can serve it with any pudding or tart.

You could also substitute double cream for the milk, and churn it in an ice cream maker to make a great vanilla ice cream.

MAKES ABOUT 320G

3 medium egg yolks

40g caster sugar

250ml full fat milk

½ vanilla pod

Put the eggs and sugar into a bowl and whisk until pale and creamy.

Put the milk and vanilla pod and seeds into a heavy-bottomed pan and bring to just under the boil. Pour the milk slowly into the egg mixture, whisking well as you do so.

Return the mixture to the pan over a medium heat. Using a wooden spoon, stir continuously in a figure of 8 until the cream thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon. (To test, lift the spoon out of the cream and draw a line down the back of the spoon. If the line stays clean it is ready.)

Strain immediately into a clean bowl and continue stirring for a few minutes. Remove the vanilla pod. Either serve hot or leave to cool, covered with a sheet of greaseproof paper to prevent a skin forming. Once cool, store in the fridge until you are ready to use it.



Creams

Caramelised nuts



These are great to have on hand in the kitchen – you can make up batches of different varieties of nuts, and they will keep for about three months in airtight jars. You can then use them whenever you like, for example to make the Chocolate Lollipops [here](#).

MAKES ABOUT 300G

75g caster sugar

250g whole Brazil nuts, almonds, hazelnuts or pistachio nuts (shelled weight)

Heat the sugar in a pan until it dissolves and begins to bubble. Continue cooking until it is golden brown (if you have a sugar thermometer, the temperature will be 140°C). Take off the heat and stir in the nuts.

Have ready a non-stick baking tray or a silicone mat.

Lift the nuts out of the pan with a slotted spoon and spread them over the tray or mat so that they stay separate and don't touch one another. Leave to become cold and solidified, then transfer the nuts to an airtight jar.



Raspberry jam



I always have home-made or high-quality jams on hand, for use in all kinds of assemblies and cakes. We serve this raspberry jam for breakfast before classes at the cooking school and everyone always asks for the recipe, so here it is. It is a very quick jam to make, cooked only briefly so that you retain all the vibrant colour and sharpness of the berries. Out of season you can still make it using frozen raspberries. You can use a thermometer to gauge when it is ready, or do the old-fashioned 'crinkle' test.

MAKES 2 SMALL (200G) KILNER JARS

½ teaspoon pectin powder
400g granulated sugar
500g raspberries
juice of 1 lemon
small pinch of salt

If you don't have a thermometer, put a plate into the fridge before you start so that it is well chilled.

Mix the pectin powder into the sugar.

Put all the ingredients in a large, heavy-based pan and bring to the boil. If you have a thermometer, bring the temperature up to 106°C – this will take about 10 minutes – then take off the heat.

Alternatively, after the jam has boiled for 10 minutes, take your saucer from the fridge and spoon a teaspoon of jam onto it. Put it back in the fridge for a

minute, then with your finger, push the jam to see if it forms a crinkly skin. If so, it is ready. If not, let it boil for a further minute and then test again.

While the jam is still hot, pot it in sterilised jars (see [here](#)).



Raspberry jam

Strawberry jam



MAKES 2 SMALL (200G) KILNER JARS

1 teaspoon pectin powder
450g granulated sugar
500g strawberries, cleaned and hulled
juice of 2 lemons

If you don't have a thermometer, put a plate into the fridge before you start so that it is well chilled.

Mix the pectin powder into the sugar.

Put the strawberries in a pan and give them a squash with a potato masher to release a little of their juices. Add the sugar and lemon juice and bring to the boil. If you have a thermometer, bring the temperature up to 106°C – this will take about 10 minutes – then take off the heat.

Alternatively, after the jam has boiled for 10 minutes, take your saucer from the fridge and spoon a teaspoon of jam onto it. Put it back in the fridge for a minute, then with your finger, push the jam to see if it forms a crinkly skin. If so, it is ready. If not, let it boil for a further minute and then test again.

While the jam is still hot, pot it in sterilised jars (see [here](#)).



Strawberry jam

Lemon curd



We use this in the Lemon Trifles [here](#), or you could substitute it for the blood orange cream, made using the same technique, that is used in the tart [here](#). It also makes a good filling for choux buns, mixed in a ratio of one part curd to three parts crème pâtissière (see [here](#)) or Chantilly cream (see [here](#)).

Lemon curd is very simple to make: you just need to make sure that you let it thicken gently in a bowl over your pan of barely simmering water, watching and whisking all the time. If it goes too fast it can turn into scrambled egg, but if this starts to happen you can still rescue it by taking the pan off the heat and pushing the mixture through a fine sieve into a clean heatproof bowl. Put this over your pan as before, on a low heat, and carry on.

You can keep the curd in a bowl in the fridge (covered in clingfilm) for 3–4 days. Or pot it while it is still hot, in sterilised jars, in which case it will keep for up to two months. I sterilise my jars by putting them through a dishwasher cycle, then into a preheated oven at 100°C/gas ¼ for 15 minutes to dry out completely.

MAKES 2 SMALL (200G) KILNER JARS

zest and juice of 3 medium unwaxed lemons
2 large eggs
200g caster sugar
125g unsalted butter
1 teaspoon cornflour

In a heatproof bowl, whisk all the ingredients together, then put the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure the base doesn't actually

touch the water. Whisk constantly over a low heat, moving the mixture around the bowl so that none sticks to the sides. Once it starts to become a little thicker than double cream, continue to whisk for one more minute then take off the heat.

To test that the mixture is ready, scoop a little of it with a teaspoon and push it against the inside of the bowl near the top. It should stay put without dripping. If it doesn't, put it back over the heat and whisk very briefly for another minute at a time, until it passes the test. Either pot into sterilised jars while still hot, or leave to cool, then put in the fridge until ready to use.

Drying fruit



You can buy special dehydrators for drying fruit, or a plate-warming drawer is fantastic for the job. Alternatively, dry your fruit after you have been using your oven and have switched it off. Slice the fruit and arrange on a non-stick baking tray or, better still, a silicone mat, then wait until the temperature has gone down to around 80–90°C before putting it in the oven. Leave overnight, and by morning the fruit should be ready: dry, but not brittle. If it still has too much moisture in it, turn your oven back on to the lowest temperature possible and leave in for a while longer.

The fruits that I mainly dry in this way are apples, bananas and pineapple, but you can also experiment with slices of mango, papaya, strawberry – whatever you like.

APPLE:

Don't peel them, just slice horizontally, about 2mm thick. Ignore the core, just cut through it. The pips will fall out after drying, and the slices look more attractive with little holes in the middle where the pips have been.

BANANA:

Use firm ones with their skins verging on green, rather than very yellow ones, which will be too soft. Peel them and slice them on the diagonal, 3–4mm thick (if you slice them too thinly, they will lose their shape and be difficult to use). Rub a little lemon juice over the top of each slice before drying, as bananas turn dark very quickly.

PINEAPPLE:

Cut the skin off and then slice crossways – about 5mm thick. Take a small pastry cutter and use it to stamp out the hard centre, then you can dry the rings whole, or cut them into wedges.

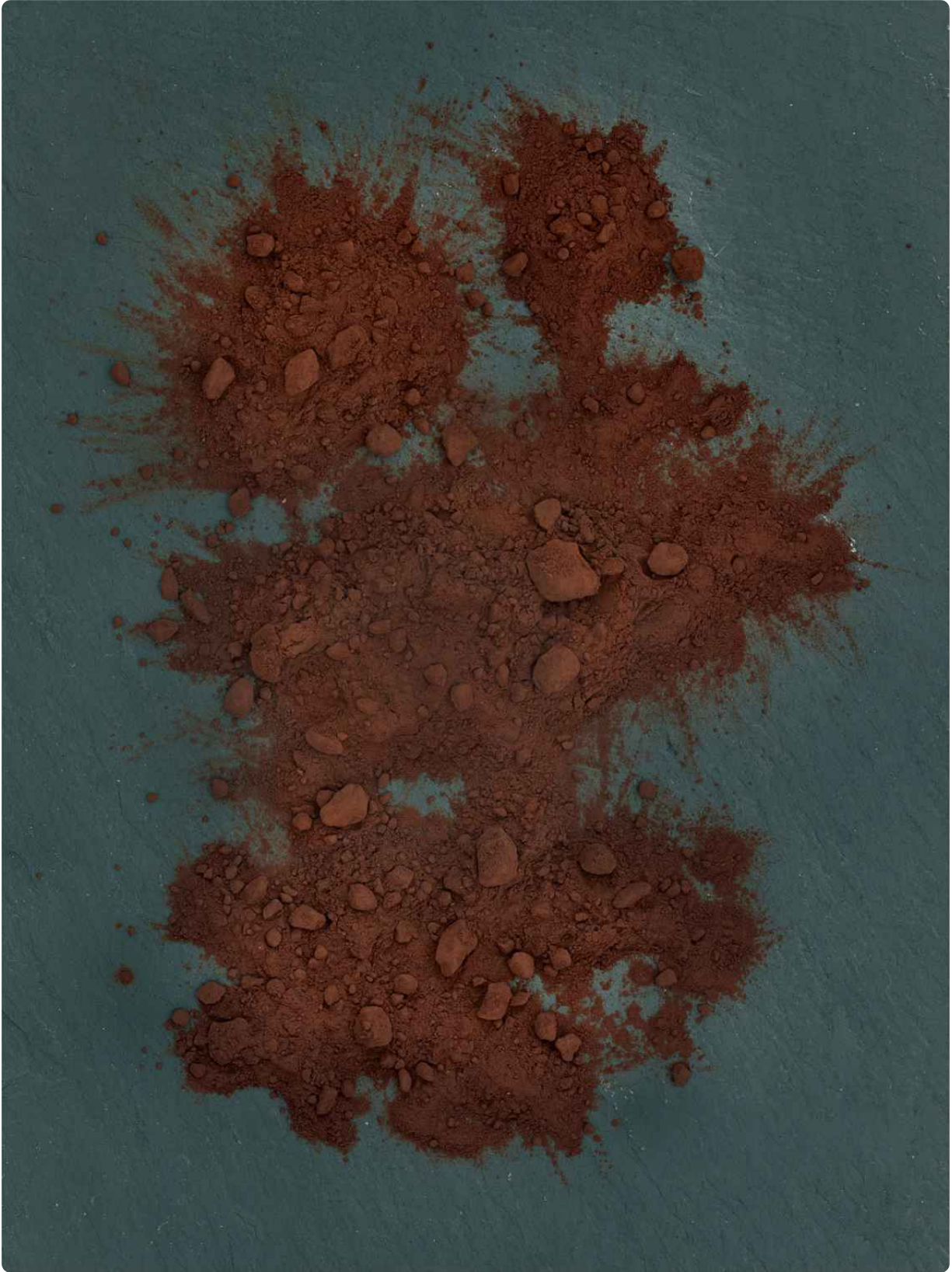


Drying fruit

Decorating with cocoa powder and chocolate



Don't underestimate the power of a little dusting of cocoa powder over cakes or puddings. Where you have chocolate icing, try dusting half of it, using a small, very fine sieve (you can even dust through one of the many stencils you can buy at baking shops). If you want a sharp edge, lay a sheet of baking paper over one area of the icing, then dust the remaining area and lift off the paper – you will be surprised how the contrast of shiny and matt creates a smart effect.



Decorating with cocoa powder and chocolate

Chocolate shavings and 'pencils'

In France, chocolate shavings and curls are known as *copeaux*, and they are a very effective way of adding some drama to a cake or tart.

Have ready a piece of clean marble, or a heavy non-stick baking tray – the idea is that warm chocolate goes straight onto something cold to set it.

Break some good chocolate of your choice (it can be dark, milk or white) into chunks, put them in a heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water – make sure the water comes close to the bottom of the bowl but doesn't actually touch it. Keep the heat very low so that you don't get steam into the bowl, as this can make the chocolate become dull-looking and stiff. Keep stirring all the time and let the chocolate melt slowly, then remove the bowl from the heat and pour it onto your marble or baking tray, spreading it out with a palette knife to about 2mm thick (no thinner, or it won't roll).

Leave at room temperature until set, but not completely hard, then take a wide spatula or metal scraper and push it through the chocolate. The further you do so the more the chocolate will roll up into curls and 'pencils'.



Chocolate shavings and 'pencils'

Piping creams

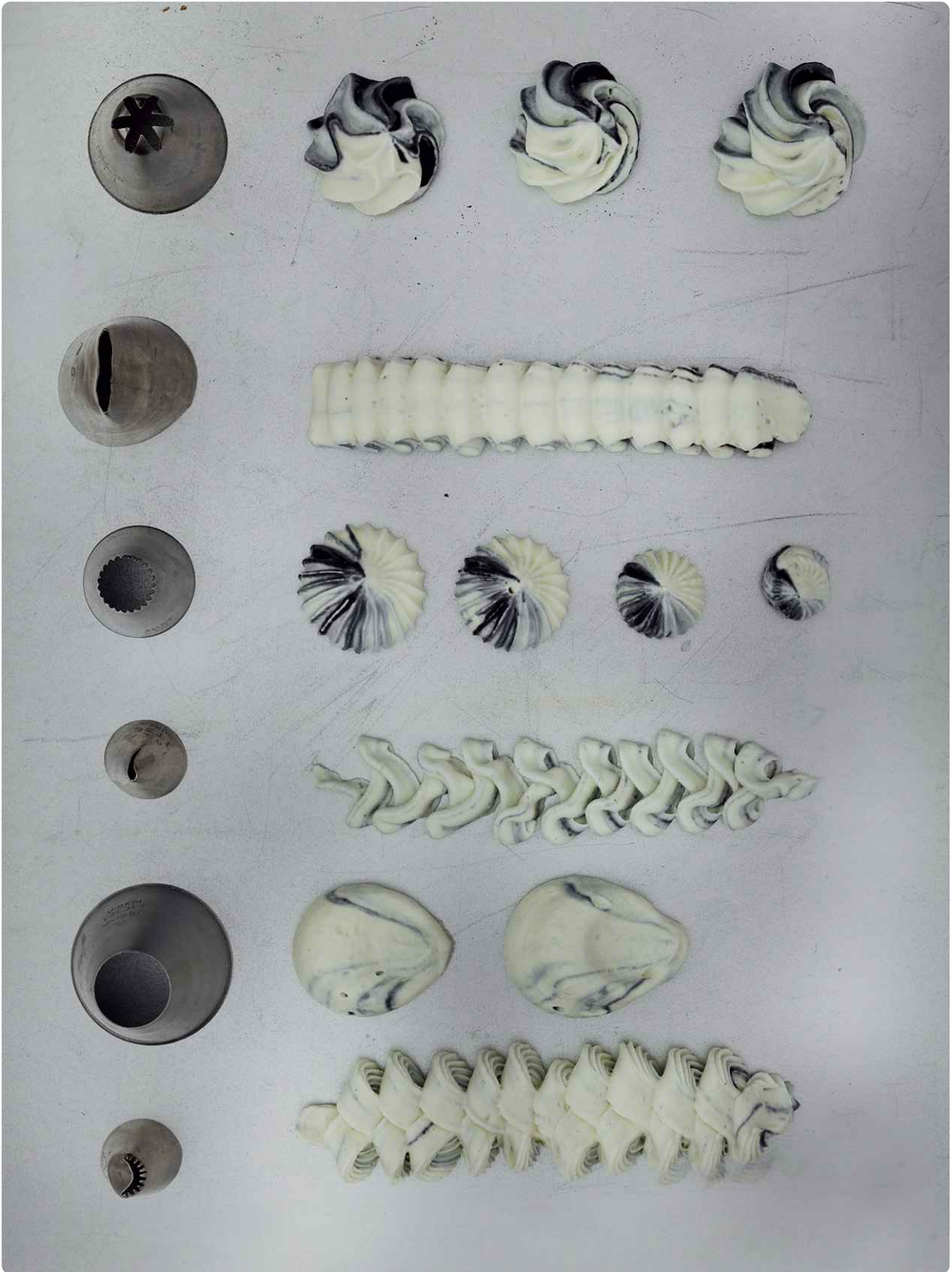


You can achieve easy, eye-catching patterns on tops of cakes and mousses, or fillings for éclairs, just by piping one of the creams [here](#) using different shapes and sizes of nozzle. The tiniest dot of coloured food paste added to your icing, but just streaked through rather than mixed in thoroughly, will give a two-tone effect.

As with choux pastry, the first thing to do is be comfortable with filling a piping bag (see [here](#)). Then experiment with different nozzles. I have a collection of metal ones, because when I first started baking these were the only ones available, and there is something quite pleasing and permanent about metal. However, metal nozzles can get squashed out of shape if you are not careful with them, whereas plastic ones tend to hold their form better. Both do a good job, though, so it is up to you which you go for. The more you try out different ones you will discover that just by moving your wrist differently, you can make all kinds of new shapes. It is difficult to give specific names to the nozzles I have used for the examples in the picture [here](#), as each manufacturer tends to have their own, but below is a rough guide:

1. This shape, known as *rosace*, is made with a large star nozzle. You need to squeeze and turn the wrist quickly in an anti-clockwise direction.
2. This is a wide ribbon nozzle. The skill here is to start at the top and work downwards, moving the nozzle forwards and backwards, forwards and backwards, in a wave-like motion.

3. This shape is made using a small star nozzle with tiny 'teeth'. Squeeze and lift up again straight away. The more pressure you use the bigger the shape.
4. A small petal nozzle can be used to create a single tear, or a woven effect. Start at the top and then move the nozzle repeatedly from right to left in a figure of 8.
5. A large plain nozzle can be used to make these shell-like shapes by squeezing and pressing downwards then dragging the nozzle slightly towards you.
6. A small shell nozzle can be piped in the same way as number 4 above.



Piping creams



Small

A COLLECTION OF SWEET THINGS
MADE IN INDIVIDUAL PORTIONS

Recipe List

Rum baba

Paris Brest

Mini coffee, chocolate, rosewater and almond éclairs

Almond éclairs

Meringues

Mini banana cakes

Tiramisu

Nougat glace

Fraisier

Quatre-quart Breton

Îles flottantes

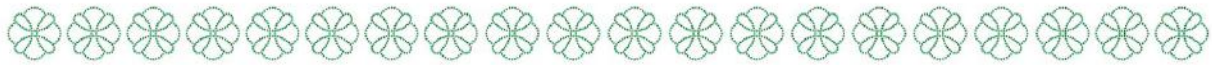
Raspberry biscuits

Lemon trifles

Jelly party

Macaron party

Rum baba



Babas are a classic Sunday lunch dessert in France. Often they are made in ring moulds, but in the bakery where I served my apprenticeship we used to bake them in dariole moulds, and this is the way I have continued to do them, as I like the shape. You also frequently see them decorated elaborately with cream and glacé cherries or other fruits, but I prefer to go for minimal decoration and maximum flavour. So I serve the babas with some of the good strong rum syrup in which they have soaked and just a little poached orange peel on top.

This recipe makes quite a lot of babas – around eighteen – as it is easier to make the batter using a food mixer than by hand, but you need a certain volume to work with. However, you can bake the babas and then freeze any that you don't want to serve immediately. You can also make the syrup and keep it in a plastic box in the fridge for up to three months, ready to soak the defrosted babas in it.

MAKES ABOUT 18 TALL MOULDS

FOR THE FERMENT:

150g strong bread flour
15g fresh yeast
150ml warm milk

FOR THE BATTER:

4 medium eggs
150g butter at room temperature, plus a little extra for greasing the moulds
50g caster sugar
½ teaspoon salt
125ml warm milk

400g strong bread flour
grated zest of 1 orange

FOR THE SYRUP:

1 orange
1 lemon
800g sugar
500ml water
200ml rum



First make the ferment. Place the flour in a bowl. Crumble the yeast into it by rubbing it between your fingertips. Whisk in the milk until the ferment is thick.

Leave for at least 2 hours at room temperature and out of draughts, by which time it will become bubbly (as shown in the right of the picture).



Using a mixer with a dough hook, beat the ferment with all the batter ingredients until the mixture is strong, elastic and stretchy.

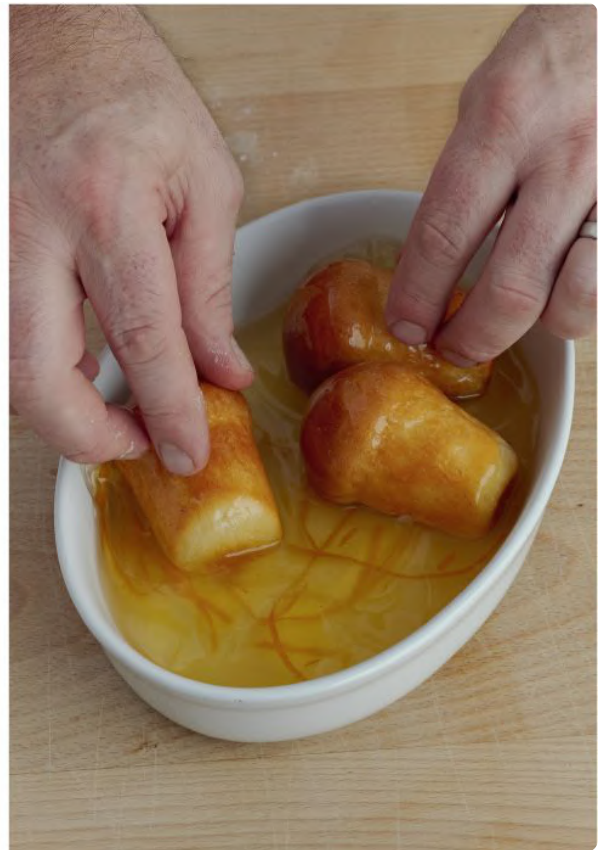
Grease the moulds heavily with butter.

I find it easiest to pipe the mixture into the moulds, but if you don't want to do this, you can just moisten your hands with water then scoop out small pieces of the batter with your fingers and drop them into the moulds. Either way, fill the moulds two thirds full. Leave in a warm place for about 40–50 minutes until the mixture has risen about 1cm above the rims of the moulds.

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5.

For the syrup, first take off the orange and lemon peel in long, thin strips (ideally use a julienne peeler; or use a vegetable peeler and then cut the strips

into thinner lengths) then put into a pan. Squeeze the juice and add to the pan along with the sugar and the water. Bring to the boil then turn down the heat and simmer for about 5–10 minutes until it thickens slightly into a syrup. Take off the heat, add the rum and allow to cool until just warm, then pour into a dish wide enough to hold the babas.



Meanwhile bake the babas in the preheated oven for about 15–20 minutes until they are golden and have risen up like champagne corks. Carefully turn each one out of its mould and cool on a wire rack. (At this point you can freeze any that you don't want to use immediately.)

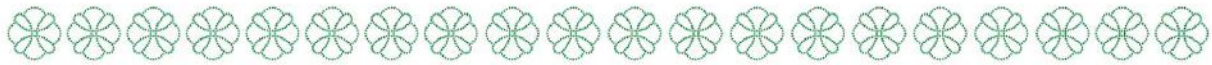
Put the babas into the syrup, turning them to coat really well, and leave for 2–3 hours at room temperature so that they soak up as much syrup as possible. Very gently prod them every so often, and when they feel soft, they are ready.

Place each baba into a glass bowl or small dish. Scoop out some of the strips of peel from the syrup – a pair of kitchen tweezers is ideal for this – and curl on top of each baba. Spoon a little of the syrup around and serve.



Rum baba

Paris Brest



These were created in 1891 to celebrate the first 1200km Paris-to-Brest bike race, one of cycling's oldest events. It is said that a pastry chef who was working along the route came up with the idea of the choux pastry rings to represent the puffy pneumatic tyres that were taking over from the old solid rubber ones.

Leave the skin on the nuts as this gives flavour and colour.

MAKES 10–12

100g hazelnuts in their skins
1 quantity crème au beurre (see [here](#))
1 quantity choux pastry mixture (see [here](#))
1 medium egg, beaten with a pinch of salt
icing sugar, for dusting

Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas 6.

Spread the hazelnuts out over a baking tray and put into the oven for about 10 minutes, shaking the tray occasionally so that they toast evenly. Take out of the oven, leave to cool, then crush half of them with a rolling pin and keep to one side. Put the rest into a coffee grinder, or use a pestle and mortar to grind them into a paste. Mix this into the crème au beurre, and keep to one side.

Snip the corner of a piping bag, if using a disposable one, insert a large star nozzle, fill with the choux pastry mixture, and then pipe 10–12 circles of around 8–10cm onto a silicone mat or non-stick baking tray (see picture

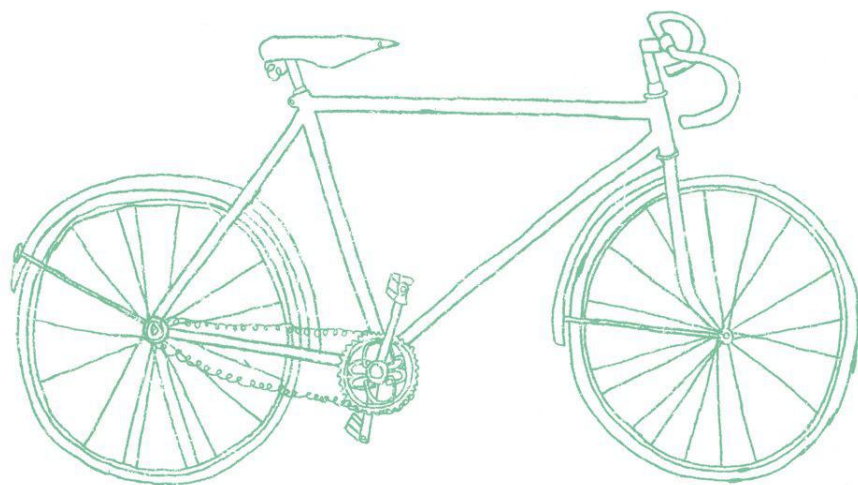
[here](#)). Brush lightly with the beaten egg. Scatter your reserved crushed nuts on top and put into the preheated oven.

Turn the oven down to 190°C/gas 5 and leave for about 15 minutes, until light golden and puffed up, turning the tray around halfway through. For the last few minutes of baking, prop the oven door slightly ajar with a wooden spoon to allow the steam to escape, and help the choux to dry out properly. Remove the tray from the oven and leave to cool.

Cut in half horizontally, pipe the base of each with the reserved hazelnut cream, replace the top and dust with icing sugar.



Paris Brest



Mini coffee, chocolate, rosewater and almond éclairs



There are two different ways to fill éclairs. You can make a small hole in the base (or at one end) of the éclair, and using a piping bag with a straight nozzle (about 5mm), squeeze the cream into the hollow. This way you don't actually see the cream from the outside. Alternatively, you can halve the éclairs all the way along their length – or almost all the way – and then pipe in the cream, using an interesting nozzle (see [here](#)), which can make them look quite special. In the following recipes I have suggested one or the other technique, but it is really up to you.

You can use Chantilly cream for the filling, which is nice and light, or crème pâtissière, which is more substantial.

If you are glazing the éclairs with chocolate you don't need a very high percentage of cocoa solids or the glaze will be quite bitter. A good 53% dark or milk chocolate is fine. Dusting half of the glaze with some cocoa powder is an easy way of making the éclairs look smart.

MAKES 24 SMALL ÉCLAIRS

1 quantity choux pastry mixture (see [here](#))
a little butter for greasing the baking tray

FOR CHOCOLATE ÉCLAIRS:

1 quantity crème Chantilly (see [here](#))
400g good milk or dark chocolate (53% cocoa solids), broken into chunks
cocoa powder, for dusting

FOR COFFEE ÉCLAIRS:

1 quantity coffee crème pâtissière (see [here](#))
300g white fondant icing
about 2 tablespoons water
a few drops of coffee essence
24 coffee beans, for decoration (optional)

FOR ROSEWATER ÉCLAIRS:

1 quantity crème Chantilly made with a few drops of rosewater instead of vanilla (see [here](#))
300g white fondant icing
about 2 tablespoons water
a few drops of red food colouring

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5. Lightly grease a non-stick baking tray or have ready a silicone mat.

Snip off the corner of a piping bag, if using a disposable one, insert a plain nozzle about 1cm in diameter, then fill with the choux pastry mixture and pipe 24 lines of around 8cm onto your baking tray or mat (see picture [here](#)).

Bake in the preheated oven for 12–15 minutes until golden and puffed up. For the last 4 minutes of baking, leave the oven door slightly ajar to allow the steam to escape, and help the drying process. Remove the tray from the oven and leave to cool.





Mini coffee, chocolate, rosewater and almond éclairs

For chocolate éclairs:

Take each éclair, and use a skewer to make a hole large enough to insert your piping nozzle (5mm) in the centre of the underside. Fill a medium piping bag with Chantilly cream and squeeze gently until you can feel the cream filling the inside of the éclair.

Put the chocolate into a heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water – make sure the water comes close to the bottom of the bowl but doesn't actually touch it. Keep the heat very low so that you don't get steam into the bowl, as this can make the chocolate become dull-looking and stiff. Keep stirring all the time and let the chocolate melt slowly, then remove the bowl from the heat.

One by one, dip the tops of the eclairs into the chocolate. Let the excess drain off into the bowl and then place on a rack until the chocolate has set. If you want to dust half of each top with cocoa powder, use a small piece of baking paper as a guide. Lay it across the first glazed top at an angle, and dust the other half finely with cocoa powder, using a small, fine sieve.

For coffee éclairs:

Fill with coffee crème pâtissière as for the chocolate éclairs [here](#).

For the icing, put the fondant and water in a pan over a very low heat and beat with a wooden spoon until it melts. Stir in the coffee essence. Take off the heat.

Take the éclairs and dip the tops into the icing as for the chocolate éclairs [here](#), then decorate each one, if you like, with a coffee bean.

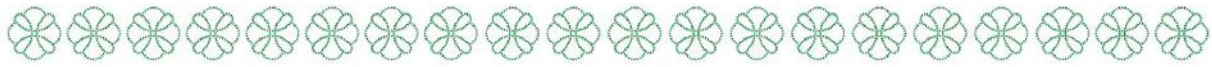
For rosewater éclairs:

This time, to fill the éclairs, cut them carefully in half lengthways. Keep the top halves to one side, then using a piping bag fitted with a flat nozzle (or similar, see [here](#)), pipe the cream along the length of the lower halves, lifting the nozzle up and down as you go, to create a wave effect.

For the icing, put the fondant and water in a pan over a very low heat and beat with a wooden spoon until it melts. Stir in the red colouring. Take off the heat.

Dip each top half into the icing as for the coffee éclairs above, and then assemble.

Almond éclairs



The addition of toasted, flaked almonds on top gives a little crunchiness and an unusual look to these little éclairs.

MAKES 24 SMALL ÉCLAIRS

a little butter for greasing the baking tray
4 tablespoons flaked almonds
1 quantity choux pastry mixture (see [here](#))
2 tablespoons ground almonds
2 tablespoons caster sugar
1 quantity crème Chantilly (see [here](#))

FOR THE CARAMEL:

200g caster sugar
2 tablespoons water

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5. Lightly grease a non-stick baking tray or have ready a silicone mat.

Toast the flaked almonds lightly in a dry frying pan until pale golden. Take off the heat and transfer to a plate. Keep to one side.

Snip off the corner of a piping bag, if using a disposable one, insert a plain nozzle about 1cm in diameter and fill with the choux pastry mixture.

Pipe 24 lines of around 8cm onto your baking tray or mat.

Mix the ground almonds with the sugar and sprinkle a little on top of each éclair.

Bake in the preheated oven for 12–15 minutes until golden and puffed up. For the last 4 minutes of baking, leave the oven door slightly ajar to allow the steam to escape, and help the drying process. Remove the tray from the oven and leave to cool.

Make a caramel by putting the sugar in a pan with the water, bring to the boil and continue to boil until golden brown (if you have a sugar thermometer, the temperature will be 140°C). It will be really hot, so be careful.

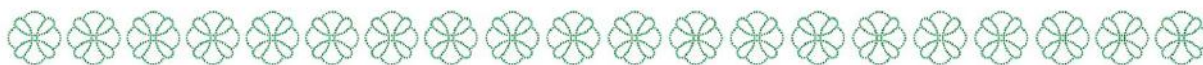
Spear each éclair with a fork and dip the top just into the surface of the caramel, and then straight onto the reserved plate of toasted almonds so that a cluster of them clings to the surface. Leave to set on a wire rack.

When the caramel has set, cut each éclair horizontally almost to the end, but not quite. Snip off the corner of a piping bag, if using a disposable one, insert a plain nozzle, and fill with Chantilly cream. One at a time, hold an éclair in your hand, prise the 'lid' up a little and pipe in the cream, squeezing and lifting as you go in a 'wave' fashion.



Almond éclairs

Meringues



We sell these big craggy meringues every day in our shop in Bath. I prefer to use Italian meringue (see [here](#)), but if you don't feel comfortable with using sugar syrup you can try the recipe for French meringue [here](#) instead; however, the meringue will be a little more dry and brittle inside, whereas the Italian meringue is soft and a little chewy. I like to run chocolate or coffee through them for flavour and colour, but you can also keep them plain, or decorate them with a little grated lemon zest or ground pistachio nuts before they go into the oven.

MAKES 6

1 quantity Italian meringue (see [here](#))

1 good tablespoon cocoa powder or ground coffee (optional)

Preheat the oven to 90°C/gas ¼. Have ready a large baking tray lined with baking paper.

If using cocoa powder or ground coffee, sieve it over the top of your meringue mixture and fold in with a big spoon. You don't want to mix it in uniformly, just streak it through.

Using two spoons, scoop out the meringue, swapping the mixture from one spoon to the other to shape it into mounds, but don't entirely smooth it – leave some good peaks and crags.

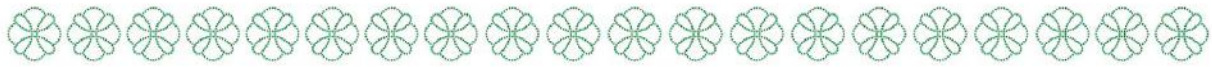
Drop each mound onto your lined tray and put into the oven for about 4 hours. The meringues should dry out and feel hard to the touch, but should

not colour, and if you lift one up and tap the base it should feel solid.



Meringues

Mini banana cakes



These are individual versions of the more traditional loaf. Simple, but elegant for serving with afternoon tea.

MAKES 6–8

120g butter
220g dark brown sugar
2 medium eggs, beaten
3 ripe bananas, crushed
230g plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
pinch of salt
2 tablespoons hot milk

TO DECORATE:

100g icing sugar, sieved
3 tablespoons water
1 banana, dried (see [here](#))

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5.

In a bowl, cream the butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in the eggs a little at a time.

Mix in the crushed bananas.

Sieve the flour, baking powder and salt together and fold into the mixture. Stir in the milk.

Spoon into individual oval or round tins or muffin trays, filling them three quarters full.

Bake in the preheated oven for 25–30 minutes until golden, the tops feel springy and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Take out of the oven, leave until cool enough to handle and then turn out and cool on a wire tray.

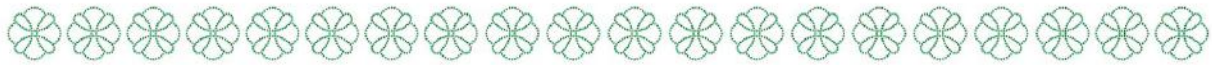
To decorate, mix the icing sugar with the water and with a small spoon drizzle over the top of each cake.

Top with two or three slices of dried banana.



Mini banana cakes

Tiramisu



I like to make the tiramisu in a large slab, then cut it into rounds to serve it, but you could simply cut it into squares if you prefer.

MAKES 8 PORTIONS

3 gelatine leaves
100g caster sugar
3 tablespoons water
4 medium eggs, separated
250g mascarpone
250ml double cream
200ml Marsala wine
½ quantity genoise sponge (see [here](#))
300ml strong coffee, cooled

TO DECORATE:

cocoa powder, for dusting

TO DECORATE WITH CARAMEL HAZELNUTS (OPTIONAL):

8 hazelnuts, shelled
100g caster sugar
1 tablespoon water

If you are decorating the tiramisu with caramel hazelnuts, make these first. Put the sugar in a pan with the water, bring to the boil and continue to boil until golden brown (if you have a sugar thermometer, the temperature will be 140°C). It will be really hot, so be careful. Using a pair of kitchen tweezers dip

each hazelnut into the caramel and pull out slowly to create a little 'tail'. Lay on a sheet of baking paper to cool and harden up.

Soak the gelatine in cold water to soften, then squeeze out the excess water.

Put the sugar in a pan with the water and heat gently for about 5–8 minutes until the sugar has dissolved and formed a colourless syrup and small bubbles are breaking the surface. If you have a sugar thermometer, the syrup is ready when the temperature reaches 121/122°C. Remove from the heat.

In a bowl, whisk the egg whites until they form soft peaks, then slowly whisk in the sugar syrup.

In a separate bowl, whisk the egg yolks with the mascarpone. In yet another bowl, whisk the cream until thick.

In a small pan, warm half of the Marsala, add the gelatine, stir until it has dissolved and then take off the heat and stir in the rest of the Marsala. Now stir this into the egg and mascarpone mixture.

Fold in the double cream and finally the egg white.

To assemble, cut the genoise sponge in half. Lay one half in the base of a deep serving dish. Brush liberally with half of the coffee, so that the sponge is well soaked.

Spread half of the Marsala mixture evenly over the top and dust with a little cocoa powder. Lay the other half of the sponge on top and press down a little. Soak with the rest of the coffee as before.

Spread the rest of the Marsala mixture over the top, smoothing it so that it is flat.

Put into the fridge for about 2–3 hours or preferably overnight.

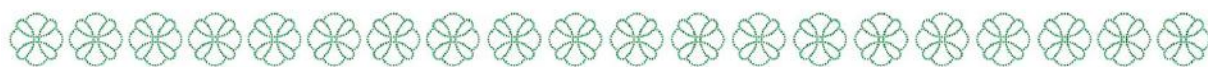
To serve, take a pastry cutter (about 10cm in diameter) and stamp out eight circles. Use a wide palette knife or fish slice to lift out into serving bowls, dust with cocoa, and top each one with a caramel hazelnut, if using.



Tiramisu



Nougat glace



This is a very easy recipe – and you can make two at a time and put one in the freezer, where it will keep for three months, so you always have a dessert ready to go. If you prefer a nut-free version, use some fresh fruit instead: raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, apricots or pineapple work especially well.

MAKES 1 × 30CM TERRINE

100g whole blanched almonds
100g hazelnuts, shelled weight
50g broken walnuts
25g pistachio nuts, shelled weight
1 heaped tablespoon caster sugar
150g mixed candied fruit
65g honey, preferably lavender
500ml double cream
4 medium egg whites

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4.

Spread the nuts over a baking tray, sprinkle with the sugar, and put into the oven for 15–20 minutes, turning them halfway through, until caramelised and light golden. Take out and let them cool down. Then, with the back of a rolling pin, crush them lightly.

Mix the caramelised nuts with the candied fruit.

Put the honey in a pan and bring to the boil, then take off the heat.

In a bowl whisk the cream until firm.



In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites to soft peaks, then slowly add the honey and continue to whisk to firm peaks. Add the fruit and nuts.

Gently fold the fruit and nuts into the cream.

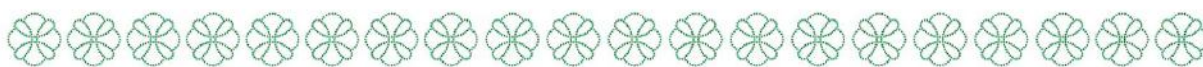
Line a 30cm long terrine (that will go into the freezer) with clingfilm, leaving an overhang all around. Spoon in the mixture and smooth the top, then fold the clingfilm over to enclose it. Put into the freezer for at least 4 hours. To serve, take out and leave for 15–20 minutes to soften slightly, then unwrap the clingfilm. To turn out, place a flat plate or cake board on top of the terrine and, using both hands, firmly grip both and turn over together. Remove the clingfilm and slice.



Nougat glacé



Fraisier



This is the lovely light layering of genoise sponge, strawberries and kirsch-flavoured cream that you see in every patisserie in France. When I was serving my apprenticeship, it was one of the first things we made when the strawberry season began: fraisier and strawberry tarts. Be patient and wait for the strawberries to be at their sweet, fruitiest best and don't be tempted to use out-of-season or unripe and hard berries, which won't match up in terms of flavour.

The classic way of presenting a fraisier is to layer everything inside a big ring or individual rings, starting with a layer of sponge for the base, and then arranging the strawberries in a circle around the edge, with their rounded ends sitting on the sponge and their pointed ends upwards. The cream is spooned inside and a second layer of sponge is placed on top, sometimes finished with strawberry glaze. When the ring slides off, you have a crown of strawberries all around the outside of the cake.

On one occasion, however, we wanted to make a fraisier for a big party so we experimented with these smaller square versions that people could just pick up and eat easily in a couple of mouthfuls. They are easier to make at home, while still delivering all the essential flavours of strawberries, kirsch and cream. If you want a more simple cream, you can use crème Chantilly instead of the crème au beurre.

MAKES 8 PORTIONS

½ quantity genoise sponge (see [here](#))

double quantity crème au beurre (see [here](#))

4 large ripe strawberries

FOR THE SYRUP:

100g sugar

100ml water

2 tablespoons kirsch

To make the syrup, put the sugar in a pan with the water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the sugar has dissolved and you have a colourless syrup. Take off the heat and stir in the kirsch.

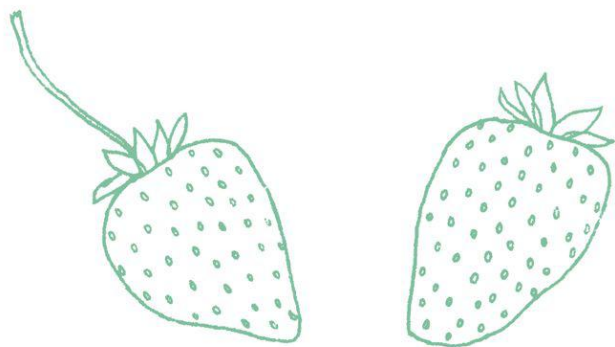
To assemble, cut the genoise sponge in half. Lay one half in the base of a deep serving dish. Brush liberally with half of the syrup, so that the sponge is well soaked.

Spread half of the crème au beurre evenly over the top. Lay the other half of the sponge on top and press down a little. Soak with more syrup as before (you may not need all of it). Spread the rest of the crème au beurre over the top, smoothing it so that it is flat. Put into the fridge for about 2–3 hours or preferably overnight.

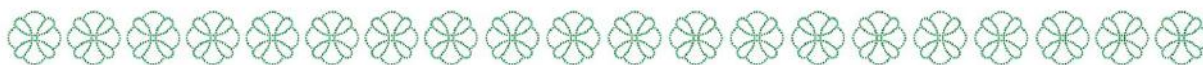
To serve, dip a sharp knife into hot water and cut the fraisier neatly into eight squares or rectangles. Cut your strawberries in half and place a half, cut side down, on top of each.



Fraisier



Quatre-quart Breton



My mother used to make these little cakes for me for when I came home from school, and they are still fashionable in Brittany. The name, which means ‘four quarters’, comes from the fact that they are made with only four ingredients: you break the eggs and weigh them, and then add the same weight of butter, sugar and flour (with a little baking powder). The key to the flavour is the salted Breton butter.

MAKES 8

For 4 shelled medium eggs, you need the same weight of:

caster sugar

plain flour (plus 1 teaspoon baking powder) salted butter, melted (plus a little extra for greasing the tins)

2 eating apples (something with a little sharpness, like a Cox or Braeburn)

Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas 6.

In a bowl, beat the eggs and sugar until pale and fluffy.

Fold in the flour and baking powder.

Stir in the melted butter.

Grease eight small tart tins (about 10–12cm in diameter and 2.5cm deep) very well with butter, and divide the batter between them.

Peel the apples, cut in half, take out the core, and then slice each horizontally. Put around four slices on top of each tin of batter.

Put into the preheated oven and bake for 25–30 minutes until golden and slightly puffed up. Leave until cool enough to handle, then turn out and cool on a rack.





Quatre-quart Breton

Îles flottantes

This is the classic pudding I remember from restaurants in France in the seventies, and you still find it across the country in local bistros. It is all about the contrasting softness of the poached meringue, the cold cream, and the crunchiness of the caramel.

MAKES 6

1 litre milk, for poaching
½ quantity Italian meringue (see [here](#))
double quantity crème anglaise (see [here](#))
80g flaked almonds

FOR THE CARAMEL:

200g caster sugar
4 tablespoons water

Put the milk in a wide pan and bring to a simmer.

Using two tablespoons, scoop up the meringue, swapping the mixture from one spoon to the other to shape it into six egg shapes – as smoothly as you can – and lower each one into the milk (you will probably have to do this in two batches). Keep the milk under a simmer and let the meringues poach for 8–9 minutes, turning them over halfway through, until they are firm to the touch. Lift out with a slotted spoon and place onto kitchen paper to drain. When they are dry, transfer them to a sheet of baking paper or a silicone mat.

Make a caramel by putting the sugar in a pan with the water, bring to the boil and continue to boil until golden brown (if you have a sugar thermometer, the

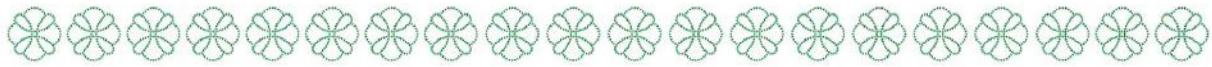
temperature will be 140°C). It will be really hot, so be careful. Pour a little over each meringue and sprinkle a few flaked almonds on top of each one.

To serve, pour some crème anglaise into each of six bowls, put a meringue on top and sprinkle with any remaining almonds.



Îles flottantes

Raspberry biscuits



MAKES 6

1 quantity sweet pastry (see [here](#)), made with seeds scraped from a vanilla pod, added with the sugar
a little flour, for rolling

TO ASSEMBLE:

1 quantity crème légère (see [here](#))
around 250g raspberries
icing sugar, for dusting
6 pistachio nuts or small leaves of mint, to decorate

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4.

Lightly flour your work surface, roll out the sweet pastry dough thinly (about 2mm) and cut into twelve squares of about 8cm.

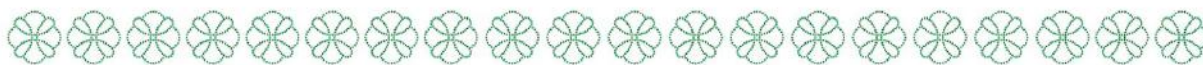
Lay the squares on a baking tray or trays and bake in the preheated oven for about 10 minutes until golden. Remove and leave to cool.

To assemble, take six of the biscuits and lay them rough side upwards, spoon some crème légère neatly in the middle of each one, then arrange your raspberries around the outside. Top with the rest of the biscuits, smooth side upwards. Sprinkle with icing sugar, then, if you like, place a metal scraper diagonally across one half to create a neat line and, using a blow torch, caramelise the visible area of sugar. Decorate with a pistachio or mint leaf in the centre.



Raspberry biscuits

Lemon trifles



How many trifles you make really depends on the size of your glasses (or you can make one big one in a glass bowl).

If you keep any trimmings of genoise sponge left over from another recipe in the freezer (wrap them in greaseproof paper inside a freezer bag), you can use them here, rather than baking the sponge specially.

MAKES AROUND 6

½ quantity genoise sponge (see [here](#)) (or equivalent trimmings, see above)

100ml limoncello

½ quantity lemon curd (see [here](#))

FOR THE LEMON JELLY:

3 gelatine leaves

100g caster sugar

100ml water

zest and juice of 3 unwaxed lemons

FOR THE CUSTARD JELLY:

3 gelatine leaves

1 quantity crème anglaise ingredients (see [here](#))

TO DECORATE:

Chantilly cream, or whipped double cream, or some strips of lemon zest, poached in syrup (see [here](#))

Soak the gelatine leaves for the lemon jelly and custard jelly briefly in cold water to soften, then squeeze out the excess water.

For the custard jelly, make the crème anglaise as [here](#), but while it is still warm, stir in the three leaves of gelatine.

For the lemon jelly, put the sugar and water in a pan with the lemon zest and juice and warm until the sugar has melted. Take off the heat, add the gelatine and stir until dissolved.

Cut your genoise sponge to fit each of six glasses (or use trimmings) and brush with limoncello, then put in the fridge for about 15 minutes until set. Now you can layer up the lemon curd, lemon jelly and custard jelly – if you have any sponge trimmings left over, you can add these to a jelly layer. I quite like to make each trifle a little different. The important thing is to put the glasses in the fridge to set each layer before adding the next one.

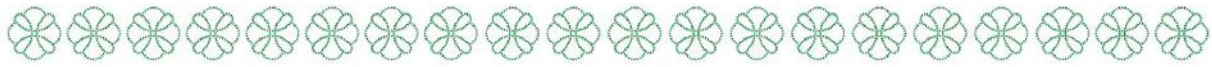
When all the layers are chilled, decorate with cream or poached lemon zest and serve.



image

Lemon trifles

Jelly party



These are fun, multi-coloured jellies with custard that I made for a children's party, and everyone loved them, adults included. You can use blackcurrant or orange squash instead of grenadine. If you like you can bake the biscuits [here](#) to serve with them.

MAKES 10–12

1 quantity lemon jelly (see [here](#))
1 quantity custard jelly (see [here](#))

FOR THE GRENADINE JELLY:

4 gelatine leaves
100g caster sugar
250ml grenadine
200ml water

sweet biscuits, to serve (optional)

For the grenadine jelly, soak the gelatine briefly in cold water to soften, then squeeze out the excess water.

Put the sugar, grenadine and water in a pan and warm until the sugar has dissolved. Take off the heat, add the gelatine and stir until dissolved.

Play around with layers of each jelly in glasses, or moulds that can be turned out. As in the trifle recipe [here](#), put your mould or glass in the fridge to allow each layer to set before adding the next one. When completely set, if you are

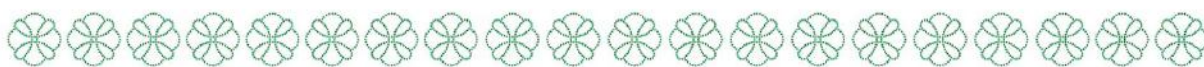
using moulds, dip each one into a bowl of hot water for a second, turn it over, shake gently and the jellies should slither out easily onto a plate.



image

Jelly party

Macaron party



Mini macarons have become incredibly popular in every colour and flavour, but my favourite macaron is a big one that you can share – or for fun I like to pile up lots of them in a tower of diminishing sizes. The method for making them is essentially the same as for an Italian meringue, and like a good meringue, a macaron should be a little crispy on the outside and slightly chewy in the centre.

The recipe makes enough for four big macarons about 15cm in diameter, and the quantities given for each of the fillings will be enough for these, or you can mix and match with whatever you have. And of course you can make the macarons in any size you like.

MAKES 4 LARGE MACARONS

FOR THE MACARON MIX:

300g icing sugar
45ml water
220g egg white (from about 6 medium eggs)
300g ground almonds
300g granulated sugar

FOR THE FILLINGS:

choose from:

½ quantity chocolate ganache (see [here](#))

½ quantity lemon curd (see [here](#))

½ quantity of crème Chantilly (see [here](#)), plus a punnet of fresh raspberries

Preheat the oven to 130°C/gas 1.

Put the sugar in a pan with the water and heat gently for about 5–8 minutes until the sugar has dissolved and formed a colourless syrup and small bubbles are breaking the surface. If you have a sugar thermometer, the temperature should be 121/122°C.

Now you are ready to whisk your egg whites. You can do this using a food mixer with a whisk attachment, or use a hand-held whisk, but whichever you use, make sure your bowl is absolutely clean and dry, as water or grease can prevent the egg white from stiffening. Whisk the egg whites until soft, foamy peaks form then stop as soon as you reach this point, as if you over-whisk, the air bubbles that you have created will burst and the egg whites will collapse back into liquid.

Next you are going to pour the hot syrup onto the egg whites. Since you need both hands – one to whisk, one to pour – if you are whisking by hand, then before you start, wrap a tea towel around your bowl and wedge it inside an empty saucepan to hold it steady.

Whisk in the syrup, then mix the ground almonds and sugar together and tap through a sieve into the meringue, folding in with a big spoon.

Snip the corner from a piping bag, if using a disposable one, insert a 1cm plain nozzle and fill with the mixture (see [here](#)).

Pipe onto a silicone mat or baking tray lined with baking paper, in spirals starting in the centre – you can make them any size you like. Remember you need two spirals per macaron.

Put into the preheated oven for about 25–30 minutes for a large macaron of about 15cm in diameter, and allow less time, down to about 12–14 minutes, for small ones of about 3–4cm. Keep an eye on them: they are ready when they are firm to the touch on top.

Sandwich the rounds with the fillings of your choice.



image

Macaron party

image



Shared

MOUSSES, CAKES AND TARTS TO SLICE AND HAND AROUND

Recipe List

Blackcurrant mousse

Passion fruit mousse

Chocolat liegeois

Black Forest gâteau

Vin d'orange

Tarte Tropeziennne

Gâteau St Honoré

Charlotte aux pommes

Chocolate meringue tart

Blood orange tart

Flan patissier

Blackcurrant mousse



One of my fondest memories of working as an apprentice is the intense smell of the blackcurrants and passion fruit when the mousses were being made. The aromas and flavours were incredible. While the mousses were setting in their rings, I couldn't help running my fingertips around the mixing bowls and licking my fingers.

MAKES 1 × 23CM MOUSSE

1 quantity genoise sponge (see [here](#))
50ml crème de cassis

FOR THE MOUSSE:

6 gelatine leaves
400g blackcurrants (fresh or frozen) plus a few extra for decoration
1 quantity Italian meringue (see [here](#))
150ml double cream

FOR THE GLAZE:

2 gelatine leaves
50g caster sugar
150ml crème de cassis

For the mousse, soak the gelatine leaves briefly in cold water to soften, then squeeze out the excess water.

In a blender, purée the blackcurrants and push through a fine sieve to remove the skin and any stems.

Heat a quarter of the purée in a pan (don't let it boil) then take off the heat and stir in the gelatine, then stir in the rest of the purée. Leave until completely cold then fold into the Italian meringue.

Whip the cream until it forms soft peaks (just enough to hold), and then fold this into the meringue mixture.

You need a pastry ring (about 23cm in diameter and 6cm deep). Use this as a guide to cut out a circle of genoise sponge.

Place the ring on a round cake board and put the sponge into the base. Brush with the crème de cassis. Pour the mousse mixture on top and spread out gently so that it is level. You need to stop about 1mm below the rim of the ring, to allow space for a layer of glaze on top. Lift one corner of the cake board very slightly with a palette knife, and tap it very gently up and down just to remove any large pockets of air from the mousse. Put in the fridge for at least an hour until set and cold.

To make the glaze, soak the gelatine in cold water to soften, then squeeze out the excess water. Put the sugar and crème de cassis in a pan and warm until the sugar has dissolved.

Take off the heat, add the gelatine and stir until dissolved. Leave until cool but not set.

Dip the currants for decoration into the glaze to coat them, and keep to one side.

Take the mousse from the fridge, pour a thin layer of glaze over the top. Decorate the top with reserved blackcurrants and put back into the fridge for a minimum of 4 hours, or preferably overnight, to set.

To remove the ring, loosen it first around the edge of the mousse with a very slim bendy blade, or warm the ring with a blow torch very briefly from a distance, then slide off.



Blackcurrant mousse

Passion fruit mousse



I first made this in the eighties when passion fruit were all the rage in France, and it is still one of my favourite fruit mousses. Ideally use fresh passion fruit – but be aware that you need around twenty! Alternatively, there are some good ready-made frozen purées out there.

MAKES 1 × 23CM MOUSSE

6 gelatine leaves
50g caster sugar
8 medium egg yolks
around 20 ripe passion fruit (enough to give 250g pulp) or 250g ready-made frozen purée, defrosted
550ml double cream
80ml milk
1 vanilla pod
½ quantity Italian meringue (see [here](#))
1 quantity genoise sponge (see [here](#))

FOR THE SUGAR SYRUP:

100g sugar
100ml water
2 tablespoons rum or Malibu

FOR THE GLAZE:

2 gelatine leaves
50g caster sugar
250ml apple juice
seeds from three or four of the passion fruit

Soak the gelatine in cold water to soften, then squeeze out the excess water.

To make the syrup, put the sugar in a pan with the water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the sugar has dissolved and you have a colourless syrup. Take off the heat and stir in the rum or Malibu and allow to cool.

Whisk the sugar and egg yolks in a bowl until the mixture has become pale.

If using fresh passion fruit, cut them in half, scoop out the seeds and scrape the pulp into a pan (keep the seeds from three or four of the fruit to one side to use for the glaze later), or use purée. Add 50ml of the cream and all of the milk to the pan, with the vanilla pod (cut in half and seeds scraped in), and bring to a simmer. Take off the heat and slowly pour onto the sugar and egg mixture, whisking all the time.

Return the mixture to the pan and simmer gently, stirring, until you have a custard thick enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon.

Take off the heat and leave to cool slightly. Remove the vanilla pod, then stir in the gelatine until it dissolves. Leave to cool completely. Fold in the Italian meringue.

In a separate bowl, whisk the rest of the double cream until thick enough for the whisk to leave a ribbon trail when you lift it up, then fold this into the custard and meringue mixture.

You need a pastry ring (about 23cm in diameter and 6cm deep). Use this as a guide to cut out a circle of genoise sponge.

Place the ring on a round cake board and put the sponge into the base. Brush liberally with the syrup. Pour the mousse mixture on top and spread out gently so that it is level. You need to stop about 1mm below the rim of the

ring, to allow space for a layer of glaze on top. Lift one corner of the cake board very slightly with a palette knife, and tap it very gently up and down just to remove any large pockets of air from the mousse. Put in the fridge for at least an hour until set and cold.

Meanwhile, make the glaze. Soak the gelatine in cold water to soften, then squeeze out the excess water. Put the sugar, fruit juice and passion fruit seeds, if you have them, in a pan and warm through. Take off the heat and stir in the gelatine. Leave until cool but not set.

Take the mousse from the fridge, pour a thin layer of glaze over the top and put back into the fridge for a minimum of 4 hours, or preferably overnight, to set.

To remove the ring, loosen it first around the edge of the mousse with a very slim bendy blade, or warm the ring with a blow torch very briefly from a distance, then slide off.



Passion fruit mousse

Chocolat liegeois



This is a take on the classic café liegeois, which is made with coffee ice cream and cream. We use chocolate sponge and Chantilly cream – and no ice cream.

MAKES AROUND 8 SLICES

1 quantity chocolate genoise sponge (see [here](#))
1 quantity crème Chantilly (see [here](#))
cocoa powder, for dusting

FOR THE CHOCOLATE GANACHE:

400ml double cream
50ml liquid glucose
500g good quality dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa solids)
100g butter

FOR THE SYRUP:

100g sugar
100ml water
2 tablespoons strong coffee

FOR THE GLAZE:

200g good quality dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa solids)
50ml vegetable oil

Cut the sponge into three strips lengthways.

To make the ganache, heat the cream and glucose in a pan until just below the boil, pour onto the dark chocolate and whisk or use a hand blender to

emulsify everything together. Allow to cool for 5–10 minutes then whisk in the butter.

To make the syrup, put the sugar in a pan with the water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the sugar has dissolved and you have a colourless syrup. Take off the heat and stir in the coffee.

To assemble, beat the chocolate ganache just before using, as this helps to lighten it. Lay the first layer of sponge on a rectangular cake board and brush liberally with the syrup until well soaked, then spread with three quarters of the Chantilly cream. Add the next layer of sponge and brush with syrup as before. Spread with the ganache.

Top with the final layer of sponge and brush with syrup again. Spread with the remaining Chantilly cream and put into the fridge for at least 30 minutes to firm up. Meanwhile, to make the glaze, break the chocolate into chunks and put into a heatproof bowl over a pan of gently simmering water, making sure the base doesn't touch the water – you don't want to get any heat or steam in the bowl, which would make the chocolate stiffen and become dull.

Let the chocolate melt gently, stirring, then stir in the oil with a whisk and allow to cool to a spreading consistency.

Take the cake out of the fridge and pour the glaze over the top. Don't worry if it drizzles over the side a little. Put back into the fridge for another 2 hours, then if you want to neaten it up you can trim the sides where the glaze has drizzled, with a knife dipped first into hot water. Then slice crossways into around eight slices, depending on how wide you like them.

Dust each slice with cocoa through a fine sieve. If you like you can cover half of the top with baking paper diagonally as you do this. When you lift it off you will have a sharp line between matt and shiny chocolate.



Choclat liegeois



Black Forest gâteau



This famous cake is actually very similar to the Chocolat Liegeois [here](#), in that it is constructed with layers of chocolate sponge and cream, but of course it has cherries added – preferably use the big syrupy Italian Amarena ones, if you can find them.

MAKES 1 × 30CM CAKE

200g cherries in syrup
about 4 tablespoons kirsch
1 quantity chocolate genoise sponge (see [here](#))
1 quantity crème Chantilly (see [here](#))
cocoa powder, for dusting (optional)

FOR THE CHOCOLATE GANACHE:

400ml double cream
50ml liquid glucose
500g good quality dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa solids)
100g butter

Drain the cherries, reserving the syrup, and mix this with the kirsch.

Cut the cherries in half if they are large.

Line a 30cm-long terrine or bread tin with clingfilm to overhang the edges.

Cut the sponge into three strips that will fit inside the mould. Lay the first strip in place and brush liberally with the kirsch syrup so that it is well soaked.

Spread with half of the Chantilly cream. Push in half of the cherries as evenly as you can. Lay the next layer of sponge on top and brush with syrup as before.

Spread with the rest of the Chantilly cream and push in the rest of the cherries. Finish with the remaining layer of sponge and press down gently. Fold the clingfilm over the top.

Put in the fridge for at least 2 hours to set.

Meanwhile, to make the ganache, heat the cream and glucose in a pan until just below the boil, pour onto the dark chocolate and whisk or use a hand blender to emulsify all together. Allow to cool for 5–10 minutes then whisk in the butter.

Take the gâteau from the fridge and open the clingfilm. To turn out, place a cake board on top of the terrine or bread tin and, using both hands, firmly grip both and turn over together. Remove the clingfilm.

Pour half of the ganache over the top and sides of the gâteau and smooth it a little with a palette knife. Put into the fridge to set for at least half an hour, then take out and pour over the rest of the ganache, smoothing it well with a palette knife so that it is even. Put back into the fridge and chill for a further 2 hours at least before serving. Dust with cocoa powder, if desired.



Black Forest gâteau



Vin d'orange

This cool drink recipe comes courtesy of La Fontaine d'Ampus, a lovely restaurant in a courtyard in the pretty little hillside village of Ampus, France, near my wife Jo's family holiday home in Provence. It is brilliant on a summer's evening with a wedge of Tarte Tropezienne. In France you can buy 'l'alcool pour fruit' in the supermarket, but I suggest you use vodka. You do need space for a big tupperware box in the bottom of the fridge (or you could halve the quantity) – and you need patience, as you have to wait 40 days for it to be ready!

Quarter 8 oranges and 2 lemons, leaving the skin on. Put in a large tupperware box (that has a lid) along with 5 litres of rosé wine, 1 litre vodka, 850g sugar, a bayleaf, 3 cloves and a stick of cinnamon. Put on the lid and leave in the bottom of the fridge for 40 days, then filter, bottle and keep chilled.



Tarte Tropeziennne



This is a traditional tarte in and around St Tropez. My friend Thierry Pezzuli, who runs a bakery in nearby Les Arcs sur Argens, makes great big tartes, and when we are there on holiday, he always brings one when he comes around for an aperitif. This recipe is inspired by his version.

It isn't a classic tart as we think of them in the UK; it is more like a Victoria sponge, but made with a light, sweet dough. Although it will keep for a couple of days in the fridge, it is best eaten fresh at room temperature with a glass of rosé or, even better, vin d'orange, the local tippie.

The dough is difficult to make in small quantities, so I suggest you either freeze half of the dough for another time, or use it to make tiny doughnuts (see [here](#)). The easiest way to make it is using a food mixer, otherwise you need to follow my special stretch-and-fold technique for dough.

MAKES 2 × 23CM TARTES

a little butter for greasing and flour for dusting, if using a baking ring

FOR THE FERMENT:

125ml full-fat milk

½ teaspoon fresh yeast

125g strong bread flour

FOR THE DOUGH:

375g strong bread flour

10g fresh yeast

35g caster sugar

10g salt
1 medium egg
60g butter
125ml full-fat milk

Warm the milk for the ferment until just tepid then pour into the bowl of a food mixer. Crumble the yeast into the flour, add to the milk and whisk until you have a mixture like a thick porridge. Cover the bowl with clingfilm and leave for a minimum of 2 hours at room temperature.

Add all the dough ingredients to the ferment and mix for 3–4 minutes on a slow speed, then about 10 minutes at medium speed until the dough comes away cleanly from the sides of the bowl.

Lightly flour your work surface and turn out the dough. Fold it over on itself a few times then form it into a tight ball. Cover with a clean tea towel and leave to rest for at least an hour in a draught-free place.

FOR THE FILLING (FOR 1 TARTE):

a few drops of orange flower essence
1 quantity crème légère (see [here](#))

TO DECORATE:

1 medium egg, beaten with a pinch of salt
2 tablespoons flaked almonds
a little icing sugar, for dusting

Divide into two balls. Freeze one at this point, or use it for doughnuts (see [here](#)). Roll the remaining ball into a circle, roughly 23cm in diameter and about 5mm thick.

You can either lay the dough straight onto a non-stick baking tray, or if you want a neater edge, place a ring, about 23cm and lightly buttered and floured,

on top of the tray, and lift the circle of dough into it. Cover again with a clean tea towel and leave to prove for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5, and ideally put a baking stone or upturned baking tray on the middle shelf to heat up – when you place your tray of dough on it, this will help to direct the heat quickly to the base of the tart.

Brush the top of the dough with the beaten egg. Scatter with flaked almonds. Place the baking tray on top of your baking stone or upturned tray in the oven for about 20–25 minutes until dark golden brown on the top. If you lift an edge of the base with a palette knife, it should be light brown and firm underneath.

Take out of the oven, lift off the ring if using, and leave the tarte to cool on a rack.

Mix the orange flower essence into the crème légère and when the tarte is cool, slice in half horizontally and sandwich with the cream. Dust the almonds with icing sugar.



Tarte Tropézienne

Gâteau St Honoré



St Honoré is the patron saint of the boulanger, and this construction of choux pastry, cream and caramel was created as a kind of tribute to him. Honoré was also the name of my first boss, which I found very amusing at the time.

MAKES 2 SMALL GÂTEAUX

1 quantity choux pastry mixture (see [here](#))

double quantity crème Chantilly (see [here](#))

4 tablespoons flaked almonds (optional)

FOR THE CARAMEL:

200g caster sugar

2 tablespoons water

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5. Lightly grease a non-stick baking tray or have ready a silicone mat.

If decorating with almonds, toast these lightly in a dry frying pan until pale golden. Take off the heat and keep to one side.

Snip off the corner of a piping bag, if using a disposable one, insert a plain nozzle about 1cm in diameter and fill with the choux pastry mixture.

Pipe two spiral bases about 15–18cm in diameter onto the baking tray or mat (start piping from the centre and work outwards in circles). Then pipe twelve dots (about the size of a £1 coin in diameter) – make sure they are spaced well apart.

Bake in the preheated oven for 12–15 minutes until golden and puffed up. For the last 4 minutes of baking, leave the oven door slightly ajar to allow the steam to escape and help the drying process. Remove the tray from the oven and leave to cool.

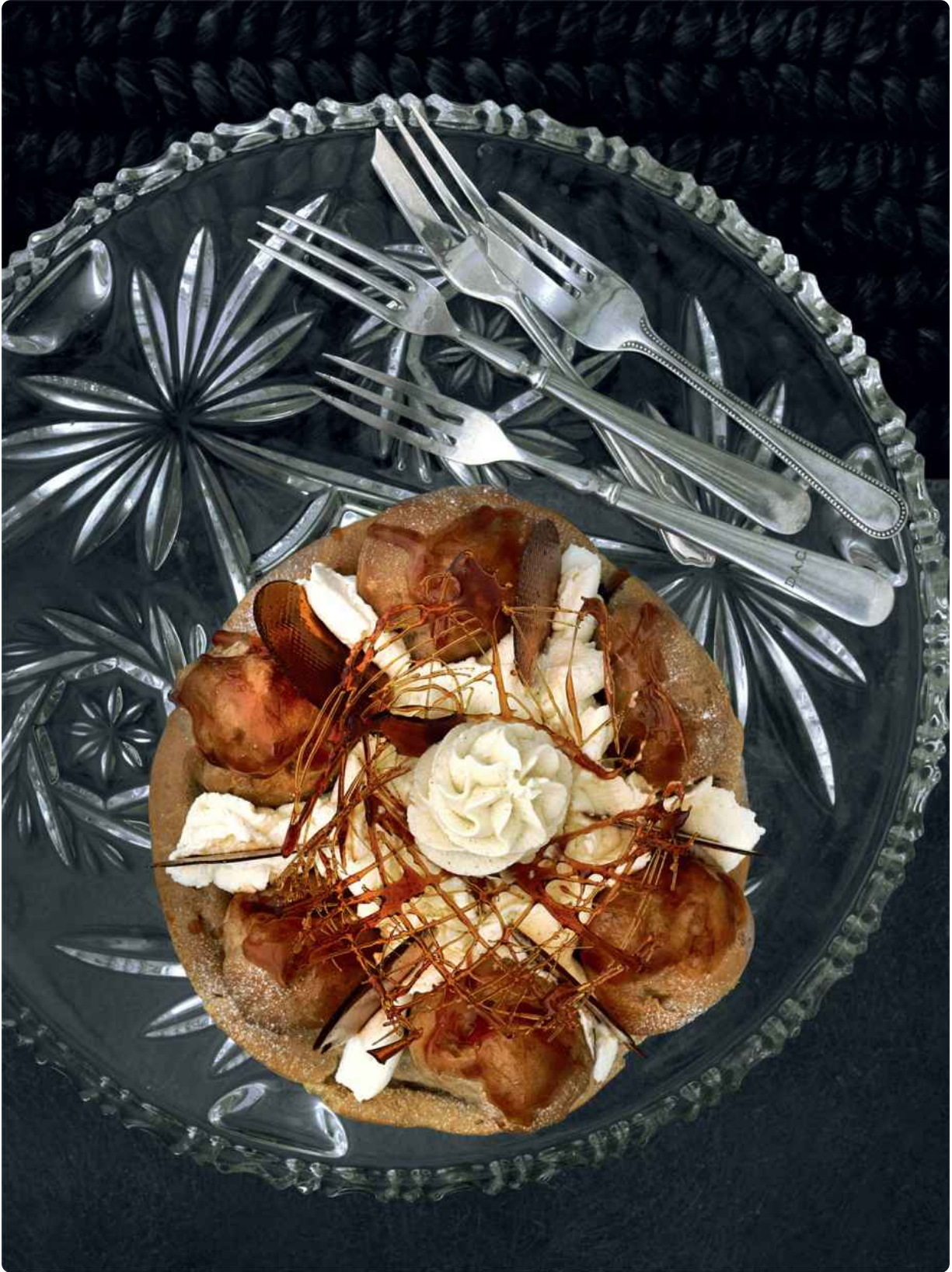
Make a hole in the base of each bun. Fill a new piping bag fitted with a small plain nozzle with the Chantilly cream and pipe a little into each bun – keep about half of the cream back for decorating the gâteaux.

Make the caramel by putting the sugar in a pan with the water, bring to the boil and continue to boil until golden brown (if you have a sugar thermometer, the temperature will be 140°C). It will be really hot, so be careful.

To assemble, carefully dip the base of each bun into the caramel and stick six of them around the edge of each spiral.

Pipe the rest of the Chantilly cream in the centre and in the gaps around the buns.

Take a spoon or fork, dip it into the caramel and swirl it around the top of the gâteaux in thin strands to decorate. Finish, if you like, with toasted almonds scattered over.



Gâteau St Honoré



Charlotte aux pommes



This always looks impressive, and so people think it must be difficult to make, but it isn't. It just takes a bit of time and planning ... and it is well worth the effort.

It is made with a *bavarois* – a light cream, made with custard and meringue – mixed with caramelised apples, encased in slim, light, puffy *biscuits à la cuillère* (the long, thin biscuits that go around the side of a cake are often called 'ladyfingers'). You want some apples with a bit of character and sharpness for this, such as Cox or Braeburn or a good local variety. You could also use pears.

I like to decorate the charlotte with wafer-thin slices of dried apple scattered over the top, which gives it an autumnal look.

MAKES AROUND 8 SLICES

FOR THE APPLE BAVAROIS:

50g butter
2 tablespoons sugar
4 eating apples, peeled, cored and diced
2 tablespoons Calvados or Somerset Cider Brandy
4 gelatine leaves
80g caster sugar
3 medium egg yolks
150ml apple juice
1 vanilla pod
250ml double cream
1 quantity Italian meringue (see [here](#))

FOR THE BISCUITS À LA CUILLÈRE:

3 medium eggs, separated
90g caster sugar
90g plain flour, sifted

TO DUST THE BISCUITS:

60g icing sugar

FOR THE SUGAR SYRUP:

100g sugar
1 tablespoon Calvados or Somerset Cider Brandy
100ml water

TO DECORATE:

Dried apples (see [here](#))

You need a number 3 (2-pint) pudding bowl. Preheat the oven to 170°C/gas 3.

To caramelise the apples for the bavarois, melt the butter and sugar in a pan until light golden, put in the apples and stir well. Add the Calvados and toss the apples around, until tender and lightly caramelised, then take off the heat and keep to one side.

To make the sugar syrup, put the sugar in a pan with the Calvados and water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the sugar has dissolved and you have a colourless syrup. Take off the heat and allow to cool.



To make the *biscuits à la cuillère*, whisk the egg whites to soft peaks, then add 60g of the sugar and continue to whisk until you have a meringue that is thick enough to hold onto the whisk.

In a separate bowl, whisk the rest of the sugar with the egg yolks until pale and creamy.

Mix the meringue into the egg yolk mix with a wooden spoon, then fold in the flour – the mixture will now be very thick and creamy.

Have ready a non-stick baking tray, or preferably a silicone mat. Snip off the corner of a piping bag, if using a disposable one, insert a 1cm plain nozzle, fill with the *biscuits* mixture and pipe fourteen fingers, each around 11cm long. Next you need to pipe three spirals (start piping from the centre and work outwards in circles). The first, for the base of the bowl, should be around 8cm;

the second, which will go in the middle of the bowl, should be around 10cm; and the largest, which will be for the top, needs to be around 12cm.



Sprinkle the icing sugar over the top using a small sieve.

Put the tray or mat into the preheated oven and bake for 10 minutes until the *biscuits* colour very lightly, expand and are spongy to the touch. Take out of the oven and leave to cool.

For the bavarois, soak the gelatine in cold water to soften, then squeeze out the excess water.

Whisk the sugar and egg yolks in a bowl until pale.

Put the apple juice in a pan with the vanilla pod (halved and seeds scraped in) and bring to a simmer. Take off the heat and slowly pour onto the sugar and

egg mixture, whisking all the time.

Return this apple custard to the pan and simmer gently, stirring, until thickened slightly.

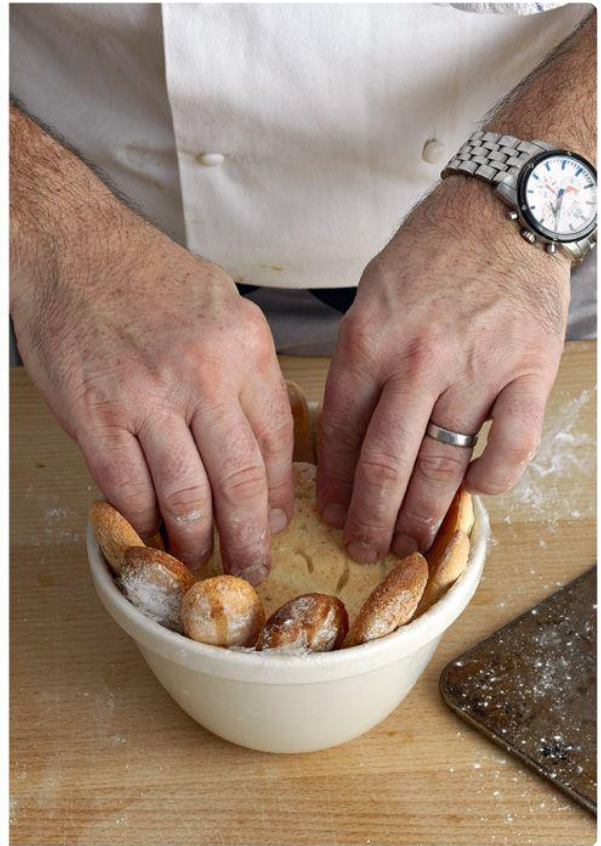
Take off the heat, remove the vanilla pod, then leave to cool slightly and stir in the gelatine until it dissolves. Leave to cool completely.



In a large bowl whisk the double cream until thick enough for the whisk to leave a ribbon trail when you lift it up. Now fold in the Italian meringue, caramelised apple, and apple custard.

To assemble the charlotte, line your pudding basin with clingfilm and put the smallest spiral of *biscuit* into the base, with the sugary side facing downwards. Arrange the fingers of *biscuit* vertically around the basin, with the sugary side

facing outwards, and overlapping slightly – make sure there are no gaps – then brush the insides of all the biscuits liberally with the reserved sugar syrup – they will soak it up well, so be generous.



Spoon in the apple bavarois mixture to come halfway up the basin.

Place the medium-sized spiral of *biscuit* on top – again this should go in sugared side downwards – and brush with syrup.

Spoon in the rest of the bavarois mixture. You are going to put the final *biscuit* on top, with the sugared side upwards this time, so before you do so, brush the smooth underside with the rest of the syrup.



Place the *biscuit* gently on top. Don't worry about the fingers sticking up beyond the final spiral of *biscuit* at this point, as once the charlotte is set you will trim them. If you have any mixture left over, put it into a freezer box and let it set – apple ice cream!

Put the bowl into the fridge for 4–5 hours, ideally overnight, to set. When ready to serve, trim the tops of the sponge fingers so that they are level with the top spiral.

To turn out, place a serving plate on top of the basin and, using both hands, firmly grip the plate and basin and turn both over together. The charlotte should slide easily onto the plate. Decorate with slices of dried apple – they will stick wherever you put them.



Charlotte aux pommes

Chocolate meringue tart



This is a play on the classic fondant pudding – soft and melting inside – combined with Italian meringue. Sometimes I embed nuggets of chocolate salted caramel into the chocolate filling before baking – if you want to do this the recipe for the caramels is [here](#). With or without them it is a serious hit of rich sweetness: you have been warned!

MAKES 1 × 30CM TART

1 quantity Italian meringue (see [here](#))

FOR THE CHOCOLATE FILLING:

50g caster sugar

2 large eggs, plus 3 medium yolks

200g good quality dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa solids)

150g unsalted butter

80g plain flour

TO DECORATE:

Long, thin chocolate pencils (see [here](#)), optional

Preheat the oven to 90°C/gas ¼.

To pipe the meringue for the tart case, cut the corner of a piping bag, if using a disposable one, and insert a 1cm star nozzle. Fill with half of the meringue and, beginning in the centre, pipe it round and round in a spiral until you have a circle of about 24–25cm in diameter, which will be the base of your tart case. Next pipe an edge about 2cm high – you can either do this by going

around twice, or just once, lifting the nozzle up and down as you go, in a wave motion (see picture [here](#)).

Put into the preheated oven for about 4 hours until dried out and solid to the touch but not coloured. Remove and keep to one side.

Turn up the oven to 160°C/gas 3.

For the chocolate filling, whisk the sugar and the whole eggs and yolks until they turn a pale straw colour and creamy.

Break the chocolate into chunks and put into a bowl over a pan of gently simmering water, making sure the base doesn't touch the water – you don't want to get any heat or steam in the bowl, which would make the chocolate stiffen and become dull.

Let the chocolate melt gently, stirring, then add the butter and continue to stir until this too has melted.

Take off the heat and stir into the sugar and egg mixture, until it is all incorporated. Gently fold in the flour.

Spoon into the meringue case and smooth the top, then put into the preheated oven and bake for 15 minutes until the mixture is springy to the touch. Don't be tempted to leave it in any longer as the centre should be soft and gooey when you cut into the tart.

Leave to cool and then decorate, if you like, with the chocolate pencils.



Chocolate meringue tart



Blood orange tart



Blood oranges have an almost grapefruity flavour, but when they are not in season, you can use bought blood orange juice, plus the zest of three ordinary oranges.

You could dust the top of the tart with icing sugar after baking, and caramelize it with a blow torch, however it looks quite special if you decorate it with slices of caramelised oranges. If you like, you can make more than you need and pot them while still hot into sterilised jars (see [here](#)), where they will keep for several months.

MAKES 1 × 20CM TART

1 quantity sweet pastry (see [here](#))
butter or baking spray, for greasing the tart tin
a little flour, for rolling
6 medium eggs, plus 1 medium egg beaten with a pinch of salt
zest and juice from around 3 blood oranges (you need 250ml of juice)
400g caster sugar
250g unsalted butter
1 tablespoon cornflour

FOR THE CARAMELISED ORANGE DECORATION:

100g sugar
200 ml water
1 blood orange or ordinary orange, cut crossways into thin rounds (about 5mm)



Lightly grease a 20cm loose-bottomed tart tin with butter or baking spray.

Lightly dust your work surface with flour, then roll out the pastry into a circle 5mm thick and large enough to fit into the tin, leaving an overhang of about 2.5cm.

Roll the pastry around your rolling pin so that you can lift it up without stretching it, then drape it over the tin and let it fall inside.



Ease the pastry carefully into the base and sides of the tin without stretching it, and leave it overhanging the edges. Tap the tin lightly against your work surface to settle it in. Prick the base of the pastry all over with a fork to stop it from trying to rise up when in the oven (even though it will be held down by baking beans, it can sometimes lift a little).

You can use a large sheet of baking paper for lining your tart case, however I prefer to use clingfilm (the kind that is safe for use in the oven or microwave) as it is softer than paper and won't leave indents in the pastry.

Place three sheets of clingfilm (or one sheet of baking paper) over the top of the pastry case, then tip in your baking beans and spread them out so that they completely cover the base. Don't trim the pastry yet. Put the case into the fridge for at least an hour (or the freezer for 15 minutes) to relax it.

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5.

Remove the pastry case from the fridge and put into the preheated oven for about 20 minutes until the base has dried out and is very lightly coloured, like parchment.



Remove from the oven and lift out the clingfilm (or baking paper) and beans. Don't worry if the overhanging edges are quite brown, as you will be trimming these away after you have finished baking your tart.

Brush the inside of the pastry case with the beaten egg and put it back into the oven for another 10 minutes. The inside of the pastry, and particularly the base, will now be quite golden brown and shiny from the egg glaze, which will act as a barrier so that the pastry will stay crisp when you put in the filling.

Let the pastry case cool down and then you can trim away the overhanging edges.

Turn down the oven heat to 120°C/gas ½.

To make the filling, whisk together the orange zest and juice, the eggs, sugar, butter and cornflour in a bowl, then place over a pan of barely simmering water, making sure the base of the bowl doesn't actually touch the water. Whisk constantly over a low heat, moving the mixture around the bowl well, so that none sticks to the sides.

Once it starts to become a little thicker than double cream, continue to whisk for one more minute then take off the heat. To test that it is ready, scoop a little bit of mixture with a teaspoon and push it against the inside of the bowl towards the top. It should stay where it is without dripping. If it doesn't, put it back over the heat and whisk briefly for another minute at a time, until it passes the test.

Pour into the pastry case and bake in the preheated oven for about 15 minutes or until the filling is set.

Leave to cool for a couple of hours to room temperature before eating.

Meanwhile, for the caramelised oranges, make a syrup by putting the sugar in a pan with the water and bringing it to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the sugar has dissolved and you have a colourless syrup. Turn the heat as low as possible.

Put in the orange slices and let them poach very gently in the syrup for a good hour at least. Take off the heat, cool and drain off the syrup before arranging on the top of the tart.



Blood orange tart

Flan patissier



This is the tart that you see in patisseries all over France (the equivalent of a custard tart). It is often made in a long slab that can be sliced as a treat at any time of the day, but especially for children coming home from school.

MAKES 1 × 20CM FLAN

1 quantity sweet pastry (see [here](#))
a little butter or baking spray, for greasing the tin
a little flour, for rolling

FOR THE FILLING:

200ml full-fat milk
200ml double cream
1 vanilla pod
1 medium egg, plus 1 medium yolk
100g caster sugar
40g cornflour
20g butter, melted

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5.

Lightly grease a 20cm loose-bottomed tart tin with butter or baking spray.

Lightly dust your work surface with flour, then roll out the pastry into a circle 5mm thick and large enough to fit into the tin, leaving an overhang of about 2.5cm.

Roll the pastry around your rolling pin so that you can lift it up without stretching it, then drape it over the tin and let it fall inside. Bake blind according to the instructions [here](#)–[here](#).

Turn down the oven to 180°C/gas 4.

To make the filling, put the milk, cream and vanilla pod (split and seeds scraped in) in a pan, bring to a simmer (be careful not to let the mixture boil), then take off the heat and leave to infuse for at least an hour. Remove the vanilla pod.

In a bowl, mix the egg, yolk and sugar until pale and creamy, and then whisk in the cornflour. Stir in the melted butter.

Put the pan containing the milk and cream mixture back on the heat and bring slowly to the boil, whisking all the time, then turn down to a simmer for 1 minute, still whisking all the time. Take off the heat and pour onto the egg and sugar mixture, stirring well.

Pour the mixture into the tart case and bake for around 45 minutes, until the filling is firm to the touch and a deep, dark golden on top – like the top of a crème brûlée. Take out of the oven, slide off the tin, and cool completely on a wire rack before serving.



Flan patissier





Treats

BITE-SIZED THINGS TO MUNCH ANY TIME,
OR TO SERVE WITH COFFEE AFTER DINNER

Recipe List

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Chocolate lollipops

Pâte de fruits

Fruitworms

Dodos

Rice pudding tartlets



A really moreish, comforting combination of creamy rice pudding, jam and sweet pastry. You could bake these in a 12-hole tart tin or use individual tins, such as the leaf-shaped tins shown here.

MAKES AROUND 12

1 quantity sweet pastry (see [here](#))
a little flour, for rolling
a little butter, for greasing the tins
1 egg, beaten with a pinch of salt
around 100g raspberry jam (see [here](#) for home-made)
icing sugar, to serve

FOR THE RICE PUDDING:

350ml full-fat milk
150ml double cream
1 vanilla pod
1 cardamom pod, lightly crushed
zest of 1 lemon
60g sugar
100g arborio rice

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5.

To make the rice pudding, put the milk, cream and vanilla pod (split and seeds scraped in) in a pan with the cardamom pod and lemon zest and bring to a simmer. Stir in the sugar and the rice and continue to simmer very gently for around 30 minutes until the milk and cream have been absorbed and the rice is tender. Take off the heat.

Skim a fine film of flour over your work surface and roll out the pastry to around 2–3mm thick. Lightly grease a 12-hole tart tin or individual tins. Cut out the pastry into twelve rounds or shapes, depending on what tins you decide to use. If using a 12-hole tin, stamp out your circles of pastry with a cutter that is about 2.5cm bigger than the holes. If using individual tins these tend to be a little deeper, so allow an extra 3cm all round. If the tins are an unusual shape, turn one of them upside down on top of your pastry as a guide and then cut around it, making your shape 3cm bigger all round. Press the pastry into the tins and run a rolling pin over the top, which will trim the edges neatly. Then line each case with a small piece of clingfilm and some baking beans and bake blind (see [here–here](#)) in the preheated oven for 15 minutes, then remove and brush the insides with beaten egg. Put back into the oven for another 8 minutes until golden brown and shiny.

Remove from the oven and turn down the heat to 180°C/gas 4.

Spread about a teaspoonful of jam into the base of each tartlet case, and then fill with rice pudding (remove the vanilla pod first). Put back into the oven for about 15–20 minutes until a little crust forms on top of the rice.

Serve either warm or cold, dusted with a little icing sugar.



Rice pudding tartlets

Madeleines



You can buy madeleines – cakes with a little dome on top – in big packets in supermarkets all over France, but if you make your own, it is very rewarding. You can buy metal or silicone madeleine trays big enough to make up to 24 at a time.

In the bakery where I worked in France we would add toppings of chocolate and nuts – it is up to you, but I have suggested dipping some of the madeleines into melted chocolate and then hazelnuts, and the rest in chocolate followed by a little dusting of cocoa powder.

MAKES AROUND 24

4 eggs
180g caster sugar
50g honey
275g plain flour
25g baking powder
250g butter, plus a little extra for greasing the moulds (unless using silicone)
zest of ½ lemon

TO DECORATE (OPTIONAL):

about 200g good quality dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), broken into pieces
a little cocoa powder, for dusting
about 2 tablespoons crushed roasted hazelnuts

In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, sugar, honey, flour and baking powder and leave for a minimum of four hours in the fridge, ideally overnight.

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5.

Put the butter into a food mixer with the lemon zest and beat it to soften (or use a hand-held mixer). Take the egg and honey mixture from the fridge and add to the butter. Mix until it is well incorporated. Lightly grease your madeleine trays, then spoon the mixture into the trays and put into the preheated oven.

Turn down the heat to 170°C/gas 3 and bake for 7–8 minutes until risen and golden. Take out of the oven, turn out and cool on a wire rack.

If you want to make chocolate madeleines, put the chocolate into a heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water – make sure the water comes close to the bottom of the bowl but doesn't actually touch it. Keep the heat very low so that you don't get steam into the bowl, as this can make the chocolate become dull-looking and stiff. Keep stirring all the time and let the chocolate melt slowly, then remove the bowl from the heat.

Have the hazelnuts ready in a shallow bowl. Dip the rounded ends of the madeleines into the chocolate and then dip half of them into the bowl of crushed nuts so that the nuts coat the chocolate. Return to the wire rack to set.

For the rest, dust part of the chocolate-dipped area with cocoa powder using a small, fine sieve and place on the rack.



Madeleines

Cannelés



A speciality from the Bordeaux region, cannelés are these days fashionable all over France. They are chewy and caramelised, and it is impossible to eat just one! The old-fashioned cannelé moulds were individual and made of copper, however these days you can buy silicone trays of them that allow you to bake up to around 18 at a time.

MAKES 18–20

200ml full-fat milk
50ml double cream
25g butter
pinch of sea salt
2 tablespoons dark rum
100g caster or granulated sugar
1 vanilla pod
1 medium egg, plus 1 medium yolk
70g plain flour

Put the milk in a saucepan and add the cream, butter, salt, rum, half the sugar and the vanilla pod (split and seeds scraped in). Bring to a simmer, taking care not to let the mixture boil, then take off the heat straight away.

In a bowl, whisk the egg and yolk with the rest of the sugar until pale, then whisk in the flour.

Slowly add the hot milk and cream mixture, stirring constantly with the whisk.

Leave to cool and then put in the fridge for at least 4 hours, ideally overnight.
Remove the vanilla pod.

Preheat the oven to 240°C/gas 9.

Half fill each mould with the mixture and bake for around 15 minutes until puffed up and caramelised.

Remove from the oven and allow to cool before turning out.



Cannelés

Mini doughnuts



These are bite-sized doughnuts that you can make with the unused dough from the Tarte Tropeziennne recipe (see [here](#)). They are too small to fill, so I put out some little bowls of raspberry jam (see [here](#)) and a few small forks and let people spear the doughnuts and dip them into the jam as they like.

Roll out the dough to about 5mm, then take a tiny cutter – about 2cm in diameter – and stamp out as many rounds as you can. Place a clean tea towel on a large baking tray, lay the rounds of dough on top, not too close together, and cover with another clean tea towel. Leave to rest and swell for about 30 minutes.

To deep fry the doughnuts, pour some vegetable oil into a pan, making sure it comes no higher than a third of the way up. Heat until it reaches 180°C (if you don't have a thermometer use a doughnut as a tester: it should sizzle gently). Fry the doughnuts in small batches (or you will overcrowd the pan and bring the temperature down) for 30 seconds maximum until they begin to turn golden, then turn them over and fry for the same amount of time, until golden all over.

Lift out with a slotted spoon and drain on several layers of kitchen paper.

Have a bowl of granulated sugar ready and when the doughnuts are drained but still warm, roll them in it and serve with raspberry jam. You could also serve them with chocolate sauce (made with 100g melted chocolate and 100ml double cream, mixed together) or crème pâtissière (see [here](#)).



Mini doughnuts

Framboisiers



These are the French equivalent of Jammy Dodgers! Biscuit and jam: what is not to like? They always seem to disappear as soon as I make them. You can use any flavour of jam.

MAKES 8

1 quantity sweet pastry (see [here](#))
a little flour, for rolling
jar of raspberry jam (see [here](#) for home-made)
icing sugar, for dusting

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4.

Lightly dust your work surface, and roll out the pastry to around 2mm thick. Using a 6cm diameter cutter, cut out sixteen rounds.

Take half of the rounds and with a small (2cm) cutter, stamp out three holes in each round.

Have ready a baking tray lined with baking paper. Lay the rounds on top and bake in the preheated oven for about 12–14 minutes until light golden brown.

Take out and leave to cool, then spread the eight bases (the rounds without holes) with raspberry jam. Dust the rest with icing sugar using a fine sieve, and then place on top.



Framboisiers

Strawberry and lavender marshmallows



Marshmallows are not just for kids – these are easy to make and are a great gift.

MAKES A BIG TRAYFUL

12 gelatine leaves
double quantity Italian meringue ingredients (see [here](#))
a few buds of lavender
100g good strawberry jam

TO COAT:

100g icing sugar
50g cornflour

Soak the gelatine in cold water until soft, then squeeze out the excess water.

Make the meringue according to the method [here](#), but dissolve the gelatine in the syrup before pouring it onto the egg whites.

Have ready a deep baking tray (about 4cm) lined with baking paper.

Mix the lavender into the strawberry jam in a small bowl then fold this into the meringue very lightly with a wooden spoon – you don't want to turn it a uniform pink, but just streak it with swirls and dots of red.

Tip into the prepared tray, level with a spoon and leave for a minimum of 4 hours, preferably overnight, in a cool place to set.

Cut the marshmallow into squares. Mix the icing sugar and cornflour in a shallow bowl, and dip each square of marshmallow into it to dust lightly.



Strawberry and lavender marshmallows

Billionaire biscuits



There are biscuits, there are millionaire biscuits, and now I give you billionaire biscuits! Rich, glamorous and glitzy with a gold-dust finish.

MAKES 10–12

1 quantity ingredients for Chocolate Salted Caramels (see [here](#))
1 quantity sweet pastry (see [here](#))
a little flour, for rolling

FOR THE CHOCOLATE SPONGE:

50g caster sugar
2 large eggs, plus 3 medium yolks
200g good quality dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa solids)
150g unsalted butter
80g plain flour

FOR THE CHOCOLATE GANACHE:

160ml double cream
25ml liquid glucose
250g dark chocolate
25g butter, softened

TO DECORATE:

a little edible gold powder or gold leaf

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4.

Follow the method for Chocolate Salted Caramels [here](#), but instead of pouring the mixture into a dish to set, just allow it to cool down until it is warm but

still spreadable.

Lightly dust your work surface with flour and roll out the pastry into a square of about 30cm and around 2mm thick. Cut this into four strips, lay them on two non-stick baking trays or silicone mats and prick the surface of the pastry with a fork.

Bake in the preheated oven for about 12–14 minutes until light golden brown, then take out and allow to cool.

For the chocolate sponge, whisk together the sugar, eggs and yolks until they become creamy and turn a pale straw colour.

Break the chocolate into chunks and put into a bowl over a pan of gently simmering water, making sure the base doesn't touch the water – you don't want to get any heat or steam in the bowl, which would make the chocolate stiffen and become dull-looking.

Let the chocolate melt gently, stirring, then add the butter and continue to stir until this too has melted.

Take off the heat and stir into the sugar and egg mixture, until it is all incorporated. Gently fold in the flour.

Spread the mixture thinly over a non-stick baking tray or silicone mat – you need a rectangle a little more than 30cm × 15cm (as you will trim the edges to this size once it is baked).

Bake for 5–6 minutes until firm to the touch. Take out of the oven, then, with a sharp knife, trim into a neat rectangle of 30cm × 15cm, then cut in half lengthways.

To assemble, lay two of the strips of pastry on a large sheet of baking paper on your work surface and spread with half of the chocolate salted caramel.

Lay a strip of chocolate sponge on top of each. Spread with the rest of the caramel, then top with the remaining strips of pastry.

To make the ganache, heat the cream and glucose in a pan until just below the boil, pour onto the dark chocolate and whisk, or use a hand blender to emulsify. Allow to cool for 5–10 minutes then whisk in the butter.

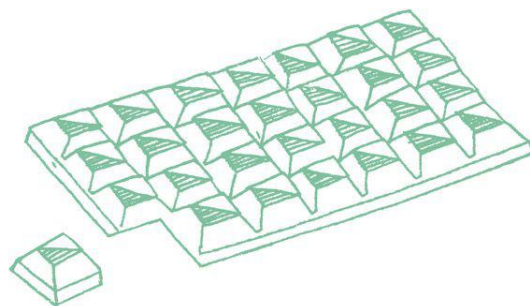
Pour the ganache over each strip of layered pastry, caramel and sponge and leave to set. When firm, cut into squares or slices, using a very sharp knife – clean the blade as you go so that you get nice sharp edges.

Decorate with gold powder – either dust it on freely through a fine sieve, use a stencil, or place a small piece of baking paper over one area and dust the rest with gold, so that you have a sharp line between gold and non-gold.

Alternatively, you could just decorate each biscuit with a little edible gold leaf.



Billionaire biscuits



Chocolate rum prunes



MAKES AROUND 20

4 cardamom pods

200g prunes

4 tablespoons dark rum

250g good quality dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa solids), broken into pieces

a little cocoa powder, for dusting

Crush the cardamom pods lightly, just enough to split the pods, and put in a clean jar with the prunes and rum. Put on the lid and leave to soak for 2–3 days at room temperature, shaking the jar regularly.

Put the chocolate into a heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water – make sure the water comes close to the bottom of the bowl but doesn't actually touch it. Keep the heat very low so that you don't get steam into the bowl, as this can make the chocolate become dull-looking and stiff. Keep stirring all the time and let the chocolate melt slowly, then remove the bowl from the heat.

Drain the prunes of excess liquid, then put into the chocolate and make sure they are completely coated. Lift out with a fork, shaking the excess chocolate back into the bowl, and lay on a sheet of greaseproof paper to set at room temperature.

Have a bowl of cocoa powder ready, and when the chocolate has set, roll the prunes in it to dust them.

Chocolate salted caramels



These are little squares for serving with coffee after a meal, or for nibbling at any time of day. Always take care when working with caramel, as if you splash any on your skin, it can burn. You really need a sugar thermometer for this.

MAKES AROUND 36

125g good quality dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), chopped
100ml double cream
100g crème fraîche
200g caster sugar
75ml water
150ml liquid glucose
25g salted Breton butter
cocoa powder, for dusting (optional)

Have ready a rectangular dish about 20cm × 12cm, lined with baking paper.

Put the chopped chocolate into a bowl.

Put the double cream and crème fraîche into a pan and bring to the boil, then take off the heat and keep to one side.

In a separate pan, bring the sugar and water to the boil, then turn down the heat, add the glucose syrup and simmer for about 10 minutes until the mixture is thick and syrupy.

Take off the heat and stir in the butter, then slowly stir in the reserved cream mixture. Put back on the hob and bring to 115°C, then take off the heat and carefully pour over the chocolate, stirring well.

Pour the mixture into the prepared dish and leave to cool for 8 hours at room temperature until firm. Cut into small squares, and dust in cocoa powder if you like.



Chocolate salted caramels

Coconut and pineapple bites



These are very retro, but as a kid I always loved Bounty bars – my first taste of coconut – and these are a grown-up version, made with the addition of Malibu and pineapple.

MAKES AROUND 12

150g desiccated coconut
4 tablespoons Malibu
50g diced semi-dried pineapple
250g milk chocolate, broken into pieces

Toast the coconut in a dry frying pan for a few minutes until it just colours, then take off the heat. Weigh 100g of it into a coffee grinder, or a mortar, add the Malibu and pineapple and grind into a rough paste that will hold together.

Form into small, tight balls and lay on a sheet of greaseproof paper. Put into the fridge for about an hour, or into the freezer for 10–15 minutes, to firm up.

Put the rest of the toasted coconut in a shallow bowl.

Put the chocolate into a heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water – make sure the water comes close to the bottom of the bowl but doesn't actually touch it. Keep the heat very low so that you don't get steam into the bowl, as this can make the chocolate become dull-looking and stiff. Keep stirring all the time and let the chocolate melt slowly, then remove the bowl from the heat.

Take the balls from the fridge and, using a spoon, dip each one into the chocolate, letting the excess drain off, then roll in the bowl of coconut and lay on a sheet of greaseproof paper until set.



Coconut and pineapple bites

Chocolate lollipops



The way you decorate these is really up to you. You will need 10–12 lollipop sticks.

MAKES 10–12

200g good quality dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), broken into pieces

200g white chocolate

mixture of some or all of: frozen raspberries, broken up; crushed hazelnuts; pieces of dried apricot; raisins; caramelised pistachio nuts (see [here](#))

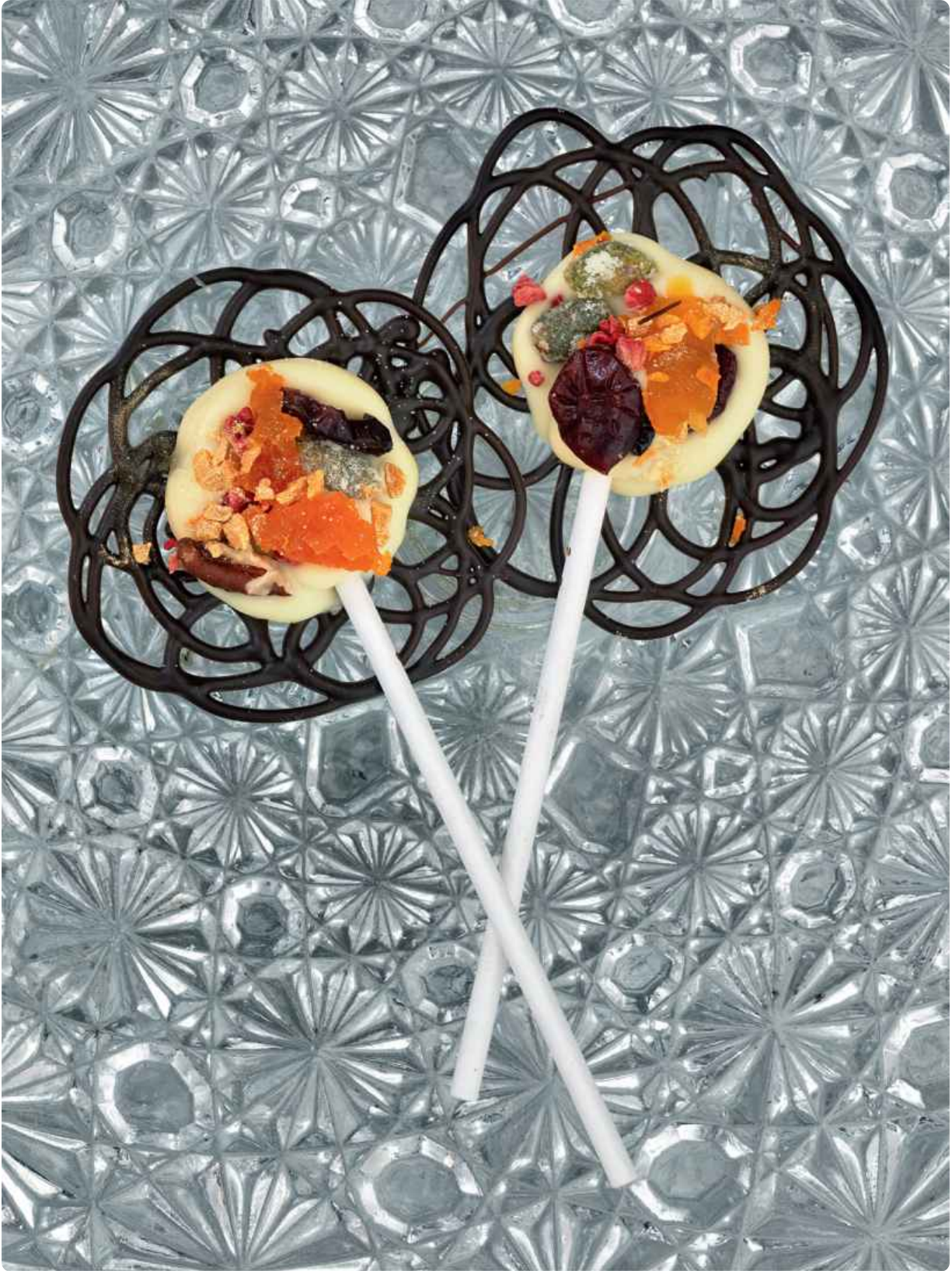
Lay a large sheet of baking paper on your work surface.

Put the dark chocolate into a heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water – make sure the water comes close to the bottom of the bowl but doesn't actually touch it. Keep the heat very low so that you don't get steam into the bowl, as this can make the chocolate become dull-looking and stiff. Keep stirring all the time and let the chocolate melt slowly, then remove the bowl from the heat.

Snip off the corner of a small piping bag, if using a disposable one, and insert a fine nozzle. Fill with the melted chocolate and pipe about 10–12 lacy, petal-like patterns onto the baking paper – be as creative as you like.

Melt the white chocolate in the same way as above, then use a teaspoon to blob small amounts in the centre of each of your petal shapes. Flatten out into discs big enough to decorate with fruit and nuts.

Lay a lollipop stick on each round of white chocolate, press lightly and then spoon some more white chocolate on top. Again flatten this out into a disc, to hold the stick in place. Decorate with a mixture of fruit and nuts, leave to set, then peel carefully from the paper.



Chocolate lollipops

Pâte de fruits



This is a recipe from pastry chef Yolande Stanley, who is one of only four people in the UK to hold the title of Master of the Culinary Arts for Pastry, and who teaches masterclasses in sugar and chocolate at our cookery school.

You will need a sugar thermometer to make sure you bring the mixture to just the right temperature.

MAKES A BOWLFUL

10g pectin powder
555g caster sugar, plus a little extra for dusting
500ml apricot purée
100ml liquid glucose
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon vodka, rum or Pernod

Mix together the pectin and 55g sugar then put in a pan with the apricot purée.

Bring to the boil, stirring all the time, then add the rest of the sugar a little at a time, stirring all the time and making sure each addition has completely dissolved before adding more.

Add the glucose and bring to 107°C, then take off the heat and add the lemon juice and alcohol.

Pour into a deep-sided dish and leave somewhere cool until set (not in the fridge, as this is too cold), then turn out and cut into rectangles of about 2 cm.

Have some more caster sugar in a shallow bowl and dip each cube into it before serving.



Pâte de fruits

Fruitworms



One day after making fruit jellies, I had some jelly mixture left over so I set it thinly in a tray and cut it into strips for the kids. They rolled them in caster sugar to resemble the ones they buy from the sweet shop. They loved them.

MAKES A BOWLFUL

6 gelatine leaves

60g sugar

either 100ml fruit cordial, such as blackcurrant or elderflower, mixed with 200ml water; or
300ml of good fruit juice, such as mango, apricot or peach

a little caster sugar, for dusting (optional)

Soak the gelatine in cold water to soften, then squeeze out the excess water.

Have ready a flat baking tray, about 38cm × 28cm, lined with clingfilm.

Put the sugar and cordial or juice in a pan and heat enough to allow the sugar to dissolve (don't let it boil). Whisk in the gelatine until it has dissolved.

Pour into the tray and put into the fridge to set for about 30 minutes–1 hour.

Lift out using the clingfilm, and turn out onto a chopping board. Take off the clingfilm and, with a sharp knife or a pizza wheel, cut the jelly into long strips about 5mm wide. Dust them in caster sugar if you like.



Fruitworms

Dodos



When I first made these and took them home my wife, Jo, loved them. I didn't have a name for them, so for a joke we christened them dodos – since Dodo was her nickname when she was a little girl – and it has stuck!

I use a silicone tray with oval-shaped moulds, about 5cm long by 2cm deep.

MAKES 12–18

100g unsalted butter, softened

100g caster sugar

pinch of salt

100g ground almonds or hazelnuts

2 medium eggs

40g plain flour

12–18 small raspberries (or 6–9 large ones, halved), blackcurrants or chocolate chips

some small mint leaves, to decorate (optional)

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4.

Beat the butter, sugar and salt together until pale and creamy. Stir in the ground nuts and beat in the eggs one at a time.

Stir in the flour.

Use a teaspoon to fill your moulds to three quarters full, push in a raspberry, blackcurrant or chocolate chip and bake in the preheated oven for 15–18 minutes until golden on top and springy to the touch.

Remove from the oven and leave to cool down in the moulds before turning out.



Dodos



Festive

EVERY YEAR I AM ASKED FOR MY
CHRISTMAS RECIPES – SO HERE THEY ARE

Recipe List

[Christmas pudding](#)

[Christmas cake](#)

[Bûche de Noël](#)

[Croque en bouche](#)

Christmas pudding



I always send a Christmas pudding to my family in France each year and they love it, as it is something completely different for them. The French still don't understand the concept of mincemeat!

My recipe is a little different to the traditional one, as I don't soak the fruit first. Instead I rest the whole pudding mixture before steaming, during which time the fruit can plump up and infuse with the rest of the flavours.

Although rum or brandy butter is the traditional accompaniment, most of my family like it with cream, but I make crème anglaise for myself!

The pudding should be made at least three weeks in advance, but can be stored for up to a year.

MAKES 1 × 2-PINT PUDDING (SIZE 3)

100g currants
200g seedless raisins
200g sultanas
60g mixed chopped candied peel
60g glacé cherries
90g blanched almonds, sliced into slivers
½ medium cooking apple, peeled, cored and coarsely chopped
½ small carrot, peeled and grated
zest and juice of ½ an orange
zest and juice of ½ a lemon
115g finely chopped suet
115g plain flour
60g white bread or brioche crumbs
115g soft brown sugar
½ teaspoon mixed spice
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ nutmeg, grated
½ teaspoon salt
3 medium eggs
½ can of Guinness
2 tablespoons brandy

Put all of the ingredients apart from the orange and lemon juices, eggs, Guinness and brandy in a large bowl and mix together well.

In a separate bowl, beat the eggs until frothy, then add the Guinness, brandy and orange and lemon juices. Add to the bowl containing the rest of the ingredients and mix well until all incorporated.

Fill your basin with the mixture, press a circle of greaseproof paper firmly over the top and put into the fridge for at least 12 hours, but up to 48 hours.

Wipe the outside of the basin clean of any mixture, if necessary, and cover with clingfilm.

Place the pudding on a trivet in a large pan on the hob and pour in enough boiling water to come about three quarters of the way up the side of the basin. Bring the water back to the boil, cover the pan tightly with a lid, and then turn down the heat and steam for 3 hours. Check the water level regularly, and top up with boiling water from the kettle as necessary.

Take the pan off the heat and, when cool enough to touch, carefully lift out the pudding. Leave to cool and store, still covered in the clingfilm, until you are ready to re-steam for another 3 hours.

To turn out, take off the clingfilm, and carefully slide a table knife around the edge of the basin to loosen the pudding. Place a serving plate on top of the basin and using both hands firmly grip the plate and basin and turn both over together. The pudding should slide easily onto the plate.

To serve, warm a glass of brandy in a small pan over a low heat, ignite it with a match and pour it while it is flaming over the pudding. Serve immediately.



Christmas pudding



Christmas cake



Sometimes fruit cakes can be really dry, but this is a recipe that is very moist, full of fruit and nuts. It can double up as a wedding cake, or you can eat it un-iced at any tea time.

When I line my tin, so that the cake cooks evenly and doesn't have any burnt or crunchy bits around the edge or the base, as well as lining it inside with baking paper I tie a folded strip of brown paper around the outside.

Of course you can decorate your cake as you like. Some people like to simply brush the top with melted apricot jam and cover it with assorted nuts and dried fruit, then glaze these with a little more jam. You can then just tie a ribbon around the cake. However, if you want to cover it with marzipan and icing, ideally start doing this around 10 days before Christmas.

As with my Christmas pudding, I don't soak my fruit in advance, but instead leave the cake mixture to rest as a whole before baking.

MAKES 1 × 23CM CAKE

245g flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ level teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons mixed spice
½ level teaspoon ground nutmeg
½ level teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ level teaspoon ground cloves
85g ground almonds
320g currants
320g raisins
320g sultanas
150g glacé cherries

150g whole mixed peel
85g blanched almonds
210g soft dark brown sugar
250g unsalted butter
grated zest and juice of 1 medium lemon
6 large eggs
8 tablespoons brandy
a little butter, for greasing the tin

TO ICE THE CAKE:

2 tablespoons clear apricot jam
500g good natural marzipan
4 medium egg whites
750g icing sugar, sifted, plus extra for dusting
4 teaspoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons glycerine
small edible silver balls, to decorate

Butter a 23cm round (or equivalent square) tin (about 9cm deep), and line with a double layer of baking paper.

With string, tie a double layer of brown paper around the outside of the tin – the paper needs to be tall enough to rise well above the edge of the tin (about 8–9cm).

Mix the flour, baking powder, salt, spices and ground almonds in a large bowl, then stir in the fruits, mixed peel and almonds.

In a separate bowl, cream together the sugar, butter and grated lemon zest until pale and fluffy, then beat in the eggs one at a time. Stir this mixture into the flour and fruit, followed by the lemon juice and half of the brandy. The mixture should be soft and moist.

Spoon the mixture into your prepared tin, level the top and leave to settle at room temperature for 2–3 hours before baking. Preheat the oven to 150°C/gas

2 and adjust the shelf to just below the centre.

Bake the cake in the preheated oven for an hour then turn down the heat to 130°C/gas 1 and bake for a further 2½–3 hours, covering the top with a sheet of baking paper for the last two hours to prevent it from burning. The cake is ready when it begins to shrink from the sides and the top is no longer spongy if you press it with a fingertip.

Take the cake from the oven and leave it to cool a little in the tin before turning it out onto a wire rack. When completely cold, wrap it tightly in foil. Once a week make some holes in the cake using a skewer, then drizzle a little brandy over it and allow it to soak in. Re-wrap and repeat the following week.

To decorate with marzipan and icing:

Heat the apricot jam until liquid and brush it all over the surface of the cake.

Dust your work surface lightly with icing sugar and then roll out the marzipan into a circle big enough to cover the entire cake.

Roll the marzipan around your rolling pin, then lift and drape it over the cake, and with your hands gently smooth and press it against the top and sides of the cake. Trim it around the base.

Wrap the cake in foil again and leave for three days.

To make the royal icing, beat the egg whites until frothy then fold in the icing sugar a spoonful at a time, stir in the lemon juice and glycerine, and then beat until the mixture is stiff enough to form strong peaks.

With a palette knife, spread the icing all over the cake, lifting the knife up and down as you go to form little peaks that look like snow. Decorate the top with the silver balls.



Christmas cake

Bûche de Noël



There are Yule log traditions all over northern Europe, and some say its history goes back to Celtic times when people would burn a huge log at the end of December to see in the Winter solstice, then they would keep the ashes for good luck throughout the following year. Others say it was fashionable in rich houses to burn such a log each Christmas Eve, but keep a piece of it back with which to light the next one. When coal began to be burned instead of logs, these cakes were made as a reminder of the old custom.

As a variation on the hazelnuts in the cream filling you could mix in some chestnut purée instead. You can buy this in small tins, and you will need about 150g. Mash it a little with a fork to loosen it before mixing into the crème au beurre.

Of course you can decorate your log as much as you like, but I think it looks most elegant with just a dusting of cocoa powder, a touch of edible gold leaf, and a little rolled or shaved chocolate.

MAKES 1 LOG

50g hazelnuts in their skins

1 quantity crème au beurre (see [here](#))

1 quantity chocolate genoise sponge (see [here](#))

a little icing sugar, for dusting

500g good natural marzipan

400g good quality dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), broken into pieces

FOR THE KIRSCH SYRUP:

100g sugar

200ml water

2 tablespoons kirsch

FOR THE DECORATION:

dark chocolate curls or 'pencils' (see [here](#))

cocoa powder, for dusting

1 small sheet edible gold leaf (optional)

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4. Spread the hazelnuts out over a baking tray and put into the oven for 15–20 minutes, shaking the tray occasionally so that they toast evenly. Take out of the oven, leave to cool, and then grind to a paste using a coffee grinder or pestle and mortar. Mix this into the crème au beurre, and keep to one side.

To make the syrup, put the sugar in a pan with the water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the sugar has dissolved and you have a colourless syrup. Take off the heat, stir in the kirsch, and leave to cool.

Have ready a large sheet of baking paper. Turn the genoise sponge onto it so that the top is downwards. Brush with two thirds of the syrup, then spread the hazelnut crème au beurre on top.



Now roll up like a swiss roll. Lift up the baking paper and as the sponge starts to roll, help it to tuck in with your fingertips, then continue to lift the paper and it will continue to roll.

Lightly dust your work surface with icing sugar and roll out the marzipan – I like it quite thin, about 2mm, but you can make it a little thicker if you prefer. Cut out a rectangle just large enough to wrap the log in and keep the trimmings to one side.

Brush the log with the remaining syrup, then lay the log on top of the rectangle of marzipan, off centre, with the seam side upwards.



Bring the marzipan over the top and press down lightly, so that it fits snugly.

Tuck in under the log and fold in the ends.

Take pieces of the marzipan trimmings and soften into balls between your fingers. Roll out into long sausages, then snake them over the top of the log, pressing them down lightly so they stick. This will give a bark-like texture once the log is covered in melted chocolate.

Have ready a rack over a tray or sheet of baking paper. Using a palette knife or fish slice under each end of the log, lift it onto the rack. Leave these in position so you can easily lift the log up again.



Put the chocolate into a heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water – make sure the water comes close to the bottom of the bowl but doesn't actually touch it. Keep the heat very low so that you don't get steam into the bowl, as this can make the chocolate become dull-looking and stiff. Keep stirring all the time and let the chocolate melt slowly, then remove the bowl from the heat.

Take off the heat and, a little at a time and with the help of a spoon, pour the chocolate over the top of the log until it is all covered.

As it begins to cool and set a little, use the tip of the spoon or a fork to make rough bark-like marks in the chocolate. When it is set enough to stay in position, lift it off the rack and onto a board or plate.

Decorate with a dusting of cocoa powder, chocolate curls or 'pencils' and some gold leaf, if you like.

Leave for 3–4 hours at room temperature, then put in the fridge, if necessary, in a plastic or cardboard box, and it will keep its shine.



Bûche de Noël

Croque en bouche



The famous French celebratory tower of choux buns ‘cemented’ together with caramel is easier to make than you might think. The key is to be organised and have two pans of caramel on the go at the same time, so that when you take the first one off the heat to begin dipping your buns into, you have a second keeping warm, ready to swap over when the first cools down and the caramel starts to solidify.

As long as you keep the finished Croque en Bouche somewhere cool and dry, it will hold together for 2–3 hours, but beware that any humidity will soften the caramel.

MAKES A CELEBRATORY TOWER FOR 12 PEOPLE

triple quantity choux pastry mixture (see [here](#))

a little butter, for greasing the baking sheet

4 tablespoons kirsch

double quantity crème pâtissière (see [here](#))

800g sugar

8 tablespoons water

FOR THE NOUGATINE BASE:

200g flaked almonds

500g caster sugar

225ml glucose syrup

Preheat the oven to 190°C/gas 5.

Lightly grease a non-stick baking sheet or have ready a silicone mat.

Snip off the corner of a piping bag, if using a disposable one, insert a plain nozzle about 1cm in diameter, then fill with the choux pastry mixture and pipe as many dots (about the size of a £1 coin in diameter) as you can onto baking trays or silicone mats – make sure they are spaced well apart.

Bake in batches in the preheated oven for 12-15 minutes until golden and puffed up. For the last 4 minutes of baking, leave the oven door slightly ajar to allow the steam to escape, and help the drying process. Remove the tray from the oven and leave to cool.

Turn down the oven to 160°C/gas 3.

Lay the flaked almonds on a baking tray and put them into the oven for about 5–6 minutes until golden, turning them halfway through. Remove and keep to one side.

Put the 500g of sugar and the glucose in a pan over a medium heat and bring to the boil, then continue to boil until golden brown (if you have a sugar thermometer, the temperature will be 140°C). Add the toasted almonds and mix thoroughly, then take off the heat and spread over a silicone mat.

Let it set a little, then using a tart ring (about 22cm) as a guide, cut around it. Cut the trimmings into little triangles to use for decorating the croque en bouche later. Leave to set fully.

Mix the kirsch into the crème pâtissière. Make a hole in the base of each choux bun. Fill a new piping bag fitted with a small plain nozzle with the crème pâtissière and pipe a little into each bun. Keep to one side.

Have ready a bowl of cold water. Divide the 800g of sugar between two pans and add 4 tablespoons of water to each. Put both on the hob at the same time, and bring to the boil, then continue to boil until golden brown (if you have a

sugar thermometer, the temperature will be 140°C). The caramel will be really hot, so be careful.

Turn off the heat beneath both pans. Take the first one off the heat and lower the base into a bowl of cold water, to cool it down enough to work with safely. Leave the other pan on the hob, but with the heat turned off.

Now you are ready to start building your tower. Have ready your nougatine base. Take your first bun and carefully dip the top (the opposite side to the one you pierced to fill with cream) into the caramel, then place it on the outside of your nougatine base, with the caramel facing to the left.

Working as quickly as you can, dip the next bun into the caramel in the same way, and butt it up against the first one (facing in the same direction) and press very gently, so that the caramel sticks the two together. Repeat, inserting your reserved little triangles of nougatine in between the buns at equal intervals as you go, until you have a complete circle of buns.

Now you are going to start tapering the tower up to a single bun. So, for the next layer, as if you were laying bricks, stick each bun over the join in the previous layer, but in a slightly smaller circle.

As soon as the first pan of caramel starts to set, put it back on the hob, turn the heat to very low (but keep an eye on it) and move on to the second pan.

Keep layering in ever smaller circles, pressing the buns gently so that they stick to each other, and swapping pans, until finally you can finish with just one bun. Keep the remaining caramel warm on the hob.

As soon as the tower of buns has set firmly lift the whole thing up very gently and transfer to a serving plate.

Now, bring the pan of caramel that you are keeping warm close to the croque en bouche, take a spoon or fork and dip it in, then pull and swirl the caramel in thin strands round and round the tower, finishing it in a ball at the top – you can be as crazy as you like with it! Again leave to set firmly.

To serve, let people just break off buns as they like – preferably working from the top downwards!



Croque en bouche



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