

CRANBERRY CREAM PUFFS

PÂTE À CHOUX (PASTRY)

- 1 Cup Water
- 1 Stick Unsalted Butter
- Dash Of Salt
- 1 Cup All-Purpose Flour
- 4 Large Eggs

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Place water, butter, and salt in a large saucepan. Over medium-high heat, melt the butter and bring the mixture to a boil.

Add the flour and stir rapidly with a wooden spoon

Return the pan to the heat briefly, stirring vigorously until the mixture is thick and shiny. Keep stirring until the batter pulls from the sides and leaves a very thin film at the bottom of the pan.

Place the batter into a mixing bowl or the bowl of a stand mixer and let cool to just barely warm to the touch. Beat at medium low speed. Add one egg and beat until fully incorporated. Do this three more times for each egg. Beat for an additional minute or two after incorporating the last egg.

Using a large tablespoon, drop the thick batter onto the prepared baking sheets lined with parchment paper in 3- to 4-tablespoon mounds. Space the mounds about 3" apart, to allow for expansion. Using your finger tip dipped in water, gently push down any jagged edges and dollops on the mounds of pastry.

Bake the pastries for 15 minutes, then, without opening the oven door, reduce the oven temperature to 350°F and bake for an additional 25 minutes, until pastries are a medium golden brown.

Remove the pastries from the oven. When they're cool enough to handle, split each in half to make top and bottom pieces; exposing the centers keep them from becoming soggy when filled.

PASTRY CREAM

- 2 Cups Whole Milk
- 1 Vanilla Bean, Split And Scraped
- 1/2 Cup Granulated Sugar
- 3 Tablespoons Cornstarch
- 1/4 Teaspoon Kosher Salt
- 4 Large Egg Yolks, Chilled
- 2 Tablespoons Unsalted Butter, Cut Into 1/2-Inch Cubes

In a 2-quart stainless steel saucier, combine milk and scraped vanilla bean along with its seeds. Bring to a bare simmer over medium heat. Remove from heat, cover to prevent evaporation, and let steep for 30 minutes.

In a medium stainless steel mixing bowl stir together sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Whisk in egg yolks until mixture is pale yellow, smooth, and fluffy, about 1 minute.

While whisking egg mixture continuously, slowly pour milk (remove vanilla bean beforehand) into egg yolk mixture in a thin stream, until all of it has been added.

Return the mixture to the saucier. Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly until pastry cream begins to thicken, about 5 minutes. Once it thickens, continue to whisk, pausing every few seconds to check for bubbles, about 1 minute. When it begins to bubble, continue whisking for exactly 1 minute more.

Remove from heat and whisk in butter until melted and thoroughly combined. Strain pastry cream through a fine-mesh sieve set over a heatproof medium bowl. Immediately place plastic wrap directly on the surface of the cream to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate at least 2 hours.

FRESH WHIPPED CREAM

- 1 Cup Heavy Cream
- 1 Tablespoon Confectioners' Sugar
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Bean Paste

Whisk cream in a chilled glass or metal bowl with an electric mixer until frothy. Add confectioners' sugar and vanilla; continue whipping until soft/medium stiff peaks form. Place in refrigerator until ready to assemble the puffs.

CRANBERRY TOPPING

- 1 cup Craisins (dried cranberries)
- 1/2 cup bourbon
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon Chinese 5 Spice or more to taste

In a small saucepan bring the dried cranberries, bourbon, water, and sugar to a rapid boil. Continuously stir the mixture until it is thick and syrupy and most of the alcohol has been evaporated.

Cover and set aside to cool down.

ASSEMBLY

Place a few tablespoons of pastry cream on the bottom half of each puff. Add a dollop of the freshly whipped vanilla bean cream. Next spoon cranberry mixture on the whipped cream and place second half of pastry on top. Continue until all pastries have been filled. Place on a serving dish and refrigerate until ready to serve. Sift a bit of powdered sugar on top of the puffs right before serving for an elevated look.