

Puff pastry

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Ingredients

225 g plain flour
85–135 ml iced water
a pinch of salt
140–200 g unsalted butter, (remove from the fridge for approx 10 minutes before use)
30 g lard

Method

1. If you are a novice at making puff pastry use the smaller amount of butter. Once you are more experienced you can use a higher amount.
2. Start by making the detrempe: Sift the flour with the salt into a large bowl. Cut the lard into small cubes and rub in with your fingertips. Add just over half of the water and mix with a knife to a form soft, but not sticky, dough, adding more water if it is too dry. Use the fingers of one hand to bring together to form a ball of dough. Chill, wrapped in cling film, in the refrigerator for 20 - 30 minutes.
3. Sprinkle a little flour on the work surface and roll the dough into a long rectangle measuring about 15 x 28 cm / 6 x 12 in. In the middle of the strip of dough roll out two x 2cm ears or flaps measuring approximately 5cm on each side.
4. Wrap the butter in either cling film or greaseproof paper and, using a rolling pin, tap the butter into a flattened block about the size of a third of the pastry. The butter should be pliable and about the same texture as the detrempe. Put the butter in the middle of the pastry and fold the ears over it. Bring the top half of the pastry over to cover the butter and bring the bottom third up to cover the pastry. Turn 90 degrees so that the pastry is like a book with the spine on the left.
5. Tap the pastry with the rolling pin to flatten the butter in the pastry a little to make ridges. Carefully roll out, quickly and lightly, until the pastry is 3 times as long as it is wide. Ensure that the corners are always kept square. Fold it very evenly in 3, first folding the top third to the middle and then the bottom third over the top of that. Turn 90 degrees and ridge and roll as before before folding into three again. Always brush off any excess flour.
6. The pastry has had 2 rolls and folds. Wrap in cling film and put to rest in a cool place for 15 minutes. The rolling and folding must be repeated twice more, the pastry again rested, and then again given 1 more roll and fold. This makes a total of 5 rolls and folds. If the pastry is still very streaky with butter, roll and fold it once more. It is then ready for use.

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