

The best Cream Puffs

Course: **Pastries**

Servings	Prep time	Cooking time	Total time
12 servings	20 minutes	25 minutes	45 minutes

Ingredients

For the Choux Pastry

250 ml (1 cup) water

80 g (5 ½ tbsp) butter or margarine

1 pinch of salt

125 g (1 cup) all-purpose flour

30 g (2 tbsp) cornstarch

4 eggs (room temperature)

1 level teaspoon baking powder

For the filling:

400 ml (1 ¾ cups) heavy whipping cream

2 tbsp sugar (or more to taste)

1 tsp vanilla extract (or 1 packet vanilla sugar)

1 packet cream stabilizer (*optional*, helps it hold longer)

Optional: canned mandarin oranges, cherries, or fresh fruit

Directions

Make the Choux Pastry:

- 1 Boil the base mixture:** In a medium saucepan, combine the water, butter, and a pinch of salt. Bring it to a gentle boil until the butter is completely melted.
- 2 Add the flour and cornstarch:** Mix the flour and cornstarch together, then pour it all into the hot butter-water mixture at once. Stir vigorously with a wooden spoon until the dough comes together into a smooth ball. Keep heating and stirring over low heat for another minute or two until a white film forms on the bottom of the pot — that's the sign your dough is ready.
- 3 Cool slightly and add eggs:** Transfer the dough ball to a mixing bowl and let it cool for 5 minutes. Then, add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. The dough will look lumpy at first but will smooth out as you mix. Finally, stir in the baking powder. The texture should be thick and glossy — soft enough to pipe, but not runny.

4 Pipe the cream puffs: Fill a piping bag with the dough and pipe small mounds (about 3–4 cm / 1 ½ inch) onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Leave some space between them — they'll puff up nicely in the oven.

5 Bake: Preheat the oven to **220°C (425°F)** and bake for **25 minutes** until golden and crisp. *Tip:* Don't open the oven during baking — the steam inside is what makes them puff! When they're done, carefully open the oven door slightly, let them sit for a minute to release steam, then take them out. Slice the tops open while still warm so the steam can escape — this keeps them crisp.

Making the Whipped Cream Filling:

6 This is where the magic happens. Grandma always kept it simple — fresh whipped cream, a bit of sugar, and sometimes a surprise inside like cherries or mandarin oranges. Whip the cream with sugar, vanilla, and stabilizer until stiff peaks form. Gently fold in chopped fruit if you like — I love mandarin segments for their brightness, but cherries or raspberries are also beautiful.

7 Assembling Grandma's Cream Puffs: Once the pastry shells are cool, carefully cut them in half horizontally. Spoon or pipe the whipped cream filling into the bottom half, add fruit if you like, and gently place the top back on.

8 Dust with powdered sugar before serving. Serve immediately, or refrigerate for up to 4 hours. The shells will stay crisp if filled just before serving.