

Mille Feuille: French Napoleon Pastry

Classic French Mille Feuille with layers of flaky puff pastry, rich pastry cream, and whipped cream. Learn to make this elegant Napoleon pastry at home.

30 min

PREP

10 min

COOK

40 min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 1 pack mille feuille
- 1 cup milk
- 3 egg yolk
- 2 tbsp corn starch
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 cup heavy cream

Instructions

- 1 Make the pastry cream**

Whisk 1 cup sugar and 2 tablespoons cornstarch together in a large bowl until completely combined with no lumps.
- 2** Add 3 egg yolks to the sugar mixture and whisk vigorously until the mixture becomes pale yellow and slightly thickened, about 2 minutes.
- 3** Heat 1 cup milk in a medium saucepan over medium heat until it just begins to steam and small bubbles form around the edges, about 3-4 minutes.
- 4** Slowly pour the hot milk into the egg mixture in a thin stream while whisking constantly to prevent the eggs from scrambling.

- 5 Pour the mixture back into the saucepan and cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until it thickens to a pudding consistency and bubbles vigorously, 3-5 minutes.
- 6 Remove from heat and whisk in 2 teaspoons vanilla extract until smooth. Press plastic wrap directly onto the surface of the cream and refrigerate for at least 2 hours until completely chilled.
- 7 **Prepare the puff pastry**
Preheat oven to 200°C (400°F). Roll the thawed puff pastry on a lightly floured surface to an even thickness and cut into 12 rectangles, each about 2x4 inches.
- 8 Place rectangles on a parchment-lined baking sheet, cover with another sheet of parchment, and place another baking sheet on top to prevent puffing. Bake for 10-12 minutes until golden brown and crispy.
- 9 **Make the icings**
Whisk 1 cup powdered sugar with 2 tablespoons milk and remaining vanilla until smooth for white icing. Transfer half to another bowl and whisk in cocoa powder until smooth for chocolate icing.
- 10 Whip 1 cup heavy cream with remaining powdered sugar using an electric mixer until soft peaks form, about 2-3 minutes.
- 11 **Assemble the napoleons**
Spread a layer of chilled pastry cream on one pastry rectangle, top with a second rectangle, spread with whipped cream, then crown with a third rectangle. Drizzle or spread with white and chocolate icings in decorative patterns.
- 12 Refrigerate assembled pastries for 30 minutes to set the layers before serving with a sharp knife to cut cleanly through the crispy pastry.

Tips

Prepare pastry cream the day before and refrigerate overnight to develop the best flavor and texture. If lumps form despite careful whisking, strain the warm cream through a fine-mesh sieve.

Keep puff pastry rectangles under a clean kitchen towel after baking to prevent them from becoming stale while maintaining their crispness.

Use a pizza wheel or sharp knife to cut clean, even rectangles from the puff pastry sheet. Irregular shapes will affect the final presentation and structural integrity.

Chill assembled Mille Feuille for 30 minutes before serving to help the layers set properly, but don't refrigerate longer than necessary to maintain pastry crispness.

When whipping cream, stop at soft peaks rather than stiff peaks to maintain a light, spreadable consistency that won't deflate the delicate pastry layers.

Dust the work surface lightly with powdered sugar instead of flour when rolling puff pastry to add subtle sweetness and prevent sticking.

For professional-looking results, use offset spatulas to spread creams evenly and create smooth, level layers between pastry sheets.

Store leftover components separately in airtight containers - pastry cream for up to 3 days, baked pastry rectangles for 1 day at room temperature.