

Chocolate Mousse

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Adapted from "Patisserie Made Simple" by Edd Kimber

- 250 g dark chocolate (chopped)
- 60 g unsalted butter (1/2 stick)

- 60 ml strong black coffee
- 4 eggs separated (room temp)
- 50 g sugar
- 2 tbsp rum
- whipped cream (optional)
- cacao nibs (optional)

1. Put the chocolate, butter and coffee in a heatproof bowl over a pan of gently simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl does not touch the water. Leave the chocolate to melt, stirring occasionally. Once you have a smooth mixture, remove the bowl from the heat.
2. In a separate bowl (or the bowl of a stand mixer if using), beat the egg yolks and sugar for 5 minutes or until the yolks are pale and fluffy. Add the rum and beat to combine.
3. In another bowl, beat the egg whites until they hold stiff peaks.
4. Add the chocolate mixture to the yolks and whisk until combined.
5. Working in three additions, gently fold in the egg whites using a spatula. You are trying to preserve the air in the whites as much as possible. Cut down the middle of bowl, dip under then come up one side like you are making a "J." Keep doing this until you can no longer see streaks of white.
6. Chill for at least 4 hours. Top with whip cream and cacao nibs if desired. Can keep in fridge for up to four days.

Standing Llama Cake

Equipment needed:

- 7 1/2" x 12" board mounted on two 1" platforms for "feet"
- cake boards
- dowels
- styrofoam head cut into 5" long, 4" wide and the height 4" at the back and 3" at the "snout"
- eyelash cutter

Edibles:

- Three 1/2 sheet cakes
 - 2600 g white chocolate ganache
 - 2 lbs white modeling chocolate
 - 4 lbs white fondant
 - pink fondant
 - blue fondant
 - gold lustre dust
 - yellow fondant
 - royal icing
 - edible glue
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Millefeuille

Sfogliatelle

I can't resist a baking challenge and ever since I saw this on GBB0 last year I knew I had to devote a weekend to it. (Turned out to be two weekends). Actually when I saw this episode my first thought was "Oh this could be as excruciatingly painful and blissfully rewarding as macarons. Let me at 'em."

But really, they're not as painful as macarons. Just very tedious but in a meditative, transcendental sort of way. And, definitely worth the effort. Recipe and video tutorial below

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[How to Make Sfogliatelle](#)

Pie Crust

We went blueberry picking recently and got a ton of blueberries. So we made blueberry muffins and blueberry pie – a family favorite. We like blueberries so much that I once tried to plant several bushes in my yard but it was a constant struggle with the wildlife. I would watch out my window looking for the sneaky birds that would try to grab my two blueberries that were ripening (that's in the whole yard not per bush). As soon as I would see a bird swooping in I would run out like a crazy woman screaming at the birds. Imagine the Alfred Hitchcock movie but in reverse. I put netting over my blueberry bushes and would dole out one blueberry per child (I only had two children at the time). But then I trapped a snake in my netting and I really didn't want to see those blueberry bushes ever again. So now, instead, we drive an hour to pick blueberries.

I recently posted my rules for a successful pie crust but I am posting them again today along with a video tutorial for making the dough. I will post another tutorial soon about rolling out the dough and assembling the pie so stay tuned. The pie dough recipe itself is not the key to success. So you can use any straightforward recipe you like that has flour, salt, butter, water and sometimes sugar. There is no need for vinegar or vodka or the like that is added to shorten the gluten strands and make it easier to roll out.

The whole process of making the dough took less than 15 minutes. I've obviously trimmed the video so that you actually still want to make pie by the end as opposed to falling asleep. You can make the dough ahead of time and leave it in the fridge for 2 days or make it and use it after 30 minutes of chilling. Either way, I have found the most success when the dough is at 60F before rolling it out.

Sometimes that means using it right out of the fridge but if it has been there for 2 days you might need 30 minutes or

longer to get it to the right temp.

1. When making pie dough a "minimal touching" approach is best. Most pie dough recipes usually have a butter content of around 60% (butter to flour, that is) which means temperature control is key. The butter needs to stay cool during the entire process of making the dough. Also, achieving a flaky crust means maintaining pockets of butter between layers of dough. When that dough then goes in the oven the steam from the butter "inflates" the layers of dough thereby creating the flakiness. If you knead that dough or overwork it you are eliminating those precious pockets of butter and essentially creating a mealy cookie dough. Which is ok if you are making pate sucee but not a flaky pie crust.

So, keep your hands off the dough. You are just going to gather the dough into a ball then smear it briefly.

That's it. Don't worry if it looks rough.

2. The other important factor in making pie dough is moving the dough while rolling it. On a well floured surface, start rolling it out into a circle, then pick it up and move it a quarter turn. Make sure it's not sticking to the surface by flinging more flour underneath if necessary. Keep rolling and turning it until you get it to size. If its too warm the fat will start to soften and it will be difficult to roll out. Put it back in the fridge for a few minutes. If you have a digital thermometer you are looking for a dough temp of about 55-60F. If it is too

cold it will start to crack.
Give it another five minutes
on the bench.

3. Let's talk fat. The butter should be diced into 1/4" cubes (I'm serious about this, use a ruler). Also, the fat has to be well chilled before using it because you will be working it into the flour and that will create heat. You can do this in the food processor which will be faster. But doing it by hand will give you a better feel for it. Imagine that every bit of flour needs to be coated with fat but you don't want the fat pieces to be so small that it just turns into a cookie. So in this tutorial you will see that I rub in 3/4 of the butter until the mixture resembles cornmeal but the rest of the butter is left pea-sized.

<http://thecakedr.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Pie-crust.mp4>

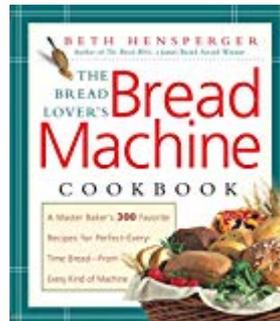
Whole Wheat English Muffins

in Your Bread Machine

English muffins practically make themselves. And if you have a bread machine, its even easier because you can do other things while the dough gets kneaded and goes through its first proof. We got this bread machine about a year ago and I have not bought supermarket bread since then. It is so easy to make bread in this machine you can't come up with an excuse not to – even when you're tired after work. So I make the sandwich bread for the kids' lunches, I use it to make brioche dough when I'm in a hurry and even naan dough. I do love to make bread by hand but this is great when you're trying to bring a lot of components together quickly.



I also love this this bread machine



cookbook and use it exclusively : I adapted the recipe for my whole wheat English muffins from the one in this book. I really needed one that would turn out good English muffins consistently. As you may know I like to buy kitchen gadgets and the last one I convinced my husband to buy was this lovely item:



Now it really is awesome but the first thing he said when we got it was “I hope you can keep up with the English muffins or I’m going to have to buy them from the store” or something to that effect. He knows that no 5-word phrase gets my blood boiling like “buy them {it} from the store.” It is like waving a red flag in front of a bull.

Needless, to say I can’t keep up with the English muffins every week but when there are no homemade English muffins then I make sure that the breakfast sandwich maker somehow magically disappears.

These are the English muffin rings I use:



Here are the step by step pictures but the video is much more entertaining in my opinion:



Once dough cycle is complete, turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface.



Divide into 12 equal pieces and roll into balls.



Flatten slightly and let rise in the English muffins rings on a griddle. After the final proof, set the griddle on a cold stove, then bring to medium heat and cook for about 5 minutes on each side.



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