

CROQUEMBOUCHE

Source: marthastewart.com

Prepared by: Joann Schwarberg, December, 2016

FOR PASTRY PUFFS (PATE A CHOUX)

12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter

1 1/2 cups water

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon sugar

1 1/2 cups sifted all-purpose flour

6 large eggs

Glaze: 1 egg beaten with 1 teaspoon water

FOR PASTRY CREAM

6 large egg yolks

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup sifted all-purpose flour

2 cups milk, scalded

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 tablespoon cognac

Pinch salt

FOR NOUGAT

2 cups sugar

Juice of 1/2 lemon

1 1/2 cups toasted finely ground almonds

FOR CARAMEL

2 cups sugar

2/3 cup water

2 tablespoons corn syrup

Heat oven to 425 degrees. To make the puffs: In a medium saucepan, melt butter in 1 1/2 cups water with salt and sugar. Remove pan from heat, and add flour. Beat until completely mixed. Return pan to heat and, using a wooden spoon, beat vigorously for 2 to 3 minutes. (A film should form on the bottom of the pan.) Cool slightly, and add 6 eggs, one at a time, beating vigorously.

Make a glaze by beating the remaining egg with 1 teaspoon water, and set aside. Using a pastry bag fitted with a coupler and a 1/2-inch-wide plain tip, pipe out mounds that are 1 inch high and 3/4 inch in diameter on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Brush with egg glaze, and smooth the tops. Bake until puffed and golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool on racks. (The puffs can be made ahead and frozen until ready to assemble.)

Make the pastry cream: In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg yolks, gradually adding sugar, until mixture is thick and pale yellow. Beat in flour. Scald milk, and add in

dribbles to egg mixture, reserving 1/2 cup. Place mixture in a clean pot over high heat, and stir vigorously until mixture boils and thickens. If it seems too thick to pipe, add reserved milk. It will become lumpy first, and then will smooth out with vigorous stirring. Be careful not to scorch the bottom of the pot. Remove from heat. Using a hand whisk, beat butter into egg mixture, one tablespoon at a time. Flavor with vanilla, cognac, & salt. Cool completely. Inject the pastry cream into the puffs with a 1/4" pastry tip.

To make the nougat, melt the sugar with the lemon juice in a heavy pot. Do not stir. Boil together until a thick amber syrup is formed. Stir in the almonds and spread the mixture on an oiled marble slab while warm. Cut with a sharp knife into a round for the base, and into small triangles for the decorations. Keep nougat warm in a 250 degree oven. (It cannot be cut or shaped if it hardens.)

To make the caramel: In a medium saucepan, combine 2/3 cup water, sugar, and corn syrup, and bring to a boil over high heat. Do not stir. Cover pan, and boil until steam dissolves any crystals. Uncover, and boil 5 more minutes, or until syrup is amber in color. Remove from heat. Dip the bottom of each puff into the caramel, and arrange puffs in a pyramid on the nougat base.

To make a spun-sugar web to wrap around the croquembouche: Cut the looped ends of a wire whisk with wire cutters, or use 2 forks held side by side, and dip the ends into caramel. Wave the caramel back and forth over the croquembouche, allowing the strands to fall in long, thin threads around it. Wrap any stray strands up and around the croquembouche. (You may need to heat the caramel to hard crack stage to get the pyramid to stick together, and the spun sugar web will be thin enough.) Serve.

Joann's Notes:

The recipe from the old cookbook has been modified, so I used both the old recipe and the new recipe and combined them together. The new version looked better, but it was for a chocolate espresso filling so I just changed the filling to the one in the old cookbook.

