

Recipe

Here's another recipe to use all those fresh strawberries that have been in the stores lately. This one is fancy enough for guests, but so easy to make you could have it every day.

Cream Puffs with Strawberries

Position the oven rack to the lower third of the oven. Preheat oven to 400 F. The temperature is critical. If your oven runs cool, use a thermometer to assure an accurate 400 F.

- * 1/2 cup water
- * 1/2 cup whole milk
- * 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- * 1/2 teaspoon salt
- * 1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
- * 4 large eggs

Combine first four ingredients in a large saucepan. Bring to a full boil over medium heat. Add the flour all at once and stir vigorously with a wooden spoon until the mixture pulls away from the sides of the pan.

Continue to cook the mixture for about one minute to remove excess moisture. The butter may ooze out, which is fine; it simply means that the moisture is evaporating.

Transfer the mixture to a bowl. Allow to cool for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Using a wooden spoon by hand or else an electric mixer on low, beat in one egg at a time.

Be sure that the paste is smooth before adding the next egg. Beat the dough until it is smooth and shiny.

You may refrigerate the mixture for up to four hours. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap. You do not need to bring the mixture to room temperature before forming.

When you are ready to form the cream puffs, grease a cookie sheet. Form eight puffs, mounding the paste mixture as tall as possible. Immediately pop them into the oven.

After 15 minutes, turn the heat down from 400 F to 350 F. Continue to bake the puffs until they are golden brown and very firm to the touch, about 20~25 more minutes.

Turn off the oven. Poke the bottom of each puff. Put them back upside down on the baking sheet inside the oven for about 10 minutes. This helps them dry out. You don't have to do this if you serve the puffs immediately while warm.

Slice them through the middle, like a hamburger bun. Fill with vanilla ice cream, or whipped cream to which you have added just a little bit of vanilla and confectioner's sugar. Put the top back on the puff. Smother with sliced strawberries. (If they're not very soft or sweet, add a little sugar to the strawberries and let them sit until they soften and give out their juice.) Top the strawberry-festooned cream puff with a dollop of whipped cream, and if you like, chocolate sauce. Hershey's makes a "special dark" chocolate sauce that is to die for. Look for it in the ice cream toppings aisle.

In the unlikely event that you have left over puffs, allow them to cool completely before putting into a covered container. Refrigerate until you serve them. They last a couple of days.



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