**Cream Puffs**

**Evie Kirkwood**

**The science: The starch in the flour swells with liquid. Egg yolk acts as an emulsifier. Some of the amino acids in the eggs repel water and others attract water. Moisture in the dough forms steam as the puffs bake. The egg proteins stretch to the point of breaking as the dough stretches to hold the steam. This creates a hollow center. When heated, liquid proteins (eggs) solidify.**

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Combine in a saucepan:

¼ c milk

¼ c water

¼ stick unsalted butter cut into small pieces

½ T sugar

¼ tsp salt (if using salted butter, omit salt)

½ c all-purpose flour

2 eggs at room temperature, lightly beaten (keep the eggs separate)

Bring the first 5 ingredients slowly up to a full boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Slide off the heat, add the flour all at once. Stir vigorously with a wooden spoon and return to heat. It may take a few minutes for the flour to begin to incorporate. As the mixture smooths out, stir faster. In 3-5 minutes, the paste will become dry and not cling to the spoon or the sides of the pan. When the spoon is pressed on it lightly it will leave a smooth imprint. Do not overcook or over stir or the dough will fail to puff. Transfer to a bowl and let cool 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. It should still be slightly warm.

Add the first egg, beating vigorously with a wooden spoon. It will take a few minutes for the egg to incorporate. Keep stirring until the dough becomes smooth and shiny. Repeat with the second egg. Instead of a wooden spoon you can use a handheld mixer on LOW. The proper consistency is reached when a small amount of dough will stand erect when scooped up on the end of a spoon.

You can use the paste immediately, or refrigerate overnight. You do not need to bring the paste to room temperature for baking.

Scoop the pastry into a zip lock bag, and snip off a 3/8-inch corner. (Or use a pastry bag with ½-inch hole.) Squeeze out 10 to 15 2 ½-inch wide by 1-inch tall puffs on a parchment lined baking sheet. Do not go back and add more paste on top of some you already squeezed out or they will not puff.

Lightly sprinkle a few drops of water on the shapes on the baking sheet (the moisture will improve the texture). Bake 10 minutes. Lower heat to 350 and bake 25 minutes longer. DO NOT open oven door while baking.

Remove to rack and cool completely. Can be frozen for 3 months. When ready to use slice off top and fill with pastry cream, sweetened whipped cream, or pudding and replace top, slightly askew.

Dust the tops with confectioners’ sugar if desired.