

Blitz Puff Pastry

<http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Blitz-Puff-Pastry/Detail.aspx>

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups cake flour
- 3 3/4 cups bread flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 1/4 cups cold butter, cut into tablespoon-sized pieces
- 1 1/4 cups cold water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice

Directions

1. In a large bowl, stir together the cake flour, bread flour, salt and white sugar. Stir in the chunks of butter so that each one is completely coated in flour. Combine the cold water and lemon juice; stir into the bowl while lightly tossing the ingredients to moisten them evenly. Gather the dough into a ball.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough into a rectangle about 1/2 inch thick. Keep the edges as square as possible. The dough will look terrible, but don't worry, it will shape up. Fold the dough into thirds like a business letter, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.
3. Place the dough on the floured work surface and turn at a 90 degree angle from the last time you rolled it out. Roll again into a rectangle again and fold into thirds. If the dough is still cold and manageable, rotate and roll again, then fold into thirds, or refrigerate and continue in 30 minutes. Finish by rolling the dough out to the size of a baking sheet. Place on a lightly floured baking sheet and wrap in plastic. refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before using.
4. To use, roll out dough to 1/4 inch thickness and cut into shapes with a sharp knife. Use as directed in recipes calling for puff pastry, or alternatively, enclose desired fillings and bake in a preheated 400 degrees F (200 degrees C) oven until puffed and golden brown.

Puff Pastry Dough

Since the dough contains no yeast, the way this pastry puffs in the oven is pure magic.

Okay, so it's not magic, it's chemistry. But puff pastry is still one of the most satisfying items to bake.

About the Pastry

Puff pastry is leavened by water in the layers of butter and dough evaporating in the hot oven, causing the layers to separate. Classical puff pastry has close to a thousand separate layers of butter and dough: the "thousand leaves" of *millefeuille*.

A traditional variant that doesn't puff as high is called blitz puff pastry (*demi-feuillete*). It's easier to master at home than classic puff pastry: rather than having a block of butter that you envelop in a square of dough, you kind of make a glorified pie crust. The technique of "blitz" (lightning!) puff pastry isn't especially fast. Plan to spend much of a weekend afternoon rolling and folding dough.

A Word of Advice

This is an ambitious project. It helps if you're familiar with dough, like making pie crusts. It can, however, be tackled successfully if you're an enthusiastic beginner. The dough can smell your fear, so be confident! This recipe will look like a complete disaster when you begin, but by the time you're rolling out the dough to shape it, you'll declare yourself a culinary genius.

Before You Begin

Unlike pie pastry, you don't want the butter to be stone cold. It should be at a cool room temperature, almost waxy, but not too soft. I recommend using the paddle attachment on a stand mixer or using a food processor's "pulse" function. You can also make this dough by hand, using a kitchen knife or a baker's bench knife.

- Basically, you want big, big chunks of butter: cut the sticks horizontally, so you've got pieces about a quarter inch thick and as long as your butter stick.
- They'll break up a bit in the mixer, but you're really trying to keep long flakes of butter that will be distributed throughout the dough (mimicking the effect of a solid sheet of butter in classic puff pastry).

Method

Use the Blitz Puff Pastry recipe.

- Turn out the butter and flour mixture onto a large work surface or big mixing bowl.
- Make a well and add the liquid (the tablespoon of lemon juice or vinegar helps tenderize the dough and keep it from oxidizing or turning gray).
- Stir gently to combine, keeping the butter pieces large.
- The dough will look terrible: all floury and "shaggy," not like a nice pastry at all.
- As best you can with dough that's falling apart, roll it out into a long rectangle. Depending on the quantity, you're probably looking at a 8 x 14" block. Fold it in thirds, like a business letter. (Again, the pastry will look a mess. Don't worry, it'll shape up.)
- Wrap it in plastic, and refrigerate for an hour. This will allow the flour to fully absorb the liquid and will let it relax after the first roll-out.
- Return the dough to your work surface and roll it out into a rectangle again. but fold it so that the short edges are in the fold. Basically, you've done a quarter turn of the dough.
- Chill and repeat one more time, again turning the dough to fold the edges inside.
- Chill before rolling, and again after cutting the dough into shapes (to keep the edges sharp) or before baking (this prevents shrinkage).