

Banana Cream Pie Eclairs

Yield: 20-25 individual servings

Ingredients

For the pastry shells

1 cup water
½ cup unsalted butter
1 tablespoon sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup all-purpose flour
4 large eggs

For the filling

2 cups whole milk
1/3 cup sugar
3 egg yolks

3 ½ tablespoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
1 tablespoon vanilla bean paste
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
½ cup heavy whipping cream
2 bananas

For the chocolate ganache

½ cup heavy whipping cream
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 tablespoon softened unsalted butter,
optional

Method of preparation

For the pastry shells

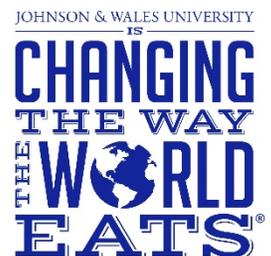
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a medium saucepan, combine one cup of water, butter, sugar and salt and bring it to a boil over high heat. When butter is melted and the mixture is boiling, add all of the flour, reduce the heat to medium and continuously stir until the dough starts to form into a ball. Keep mixing for another 3-4 minutes until light crust forms on the bottom of the pan.
3. Transfer the dough into a mixing bowl with paddle attachment and mix it for a few minutes on low speed until the mixture is cooled to room temperature.
4. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition, until the dough becomes smooth and thin enough to fall into a ribbon, but not runny.
5. Transfer the batter into a pastry bag and pipe into 4-inch strips three inches apart. Smooth any peaks down with a wet fingertip, if needed.
6. Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until the shells are puffed up and golden brown, rotating the sheets top to bottom and back to front once after first 20 minutes. When you remove the tray from the oven, the shells should maintain their puffiness. If they fall flat, place back in the oven, bake for additional 3-5 minutes, turn the oven off and let it cool in the warm oven.
7. Once cooled, cut the shells in half horizontally.

For the filling

1. Use a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Pour in the milk and slowly bring it to a simmer over medium heat. When small bubbles appear on the surface, remove from heat. Do not to bring to boil it though, or you will scramble the eggs in step 10.
2. In a medium bowl, combine egg yolks, sugar, cornstarch, vanilla extract, vanilla bean paste and salt. Whisk the mixture until creamy and doubled in size.
3. To temper the egg mixture, slowly add one cup of the heated milk while constantly whisking.
4. Transfer the tempered egg mixture into the remaining heated milk. Cook the mixture over medium heat, stirring constantly for 8-10 minutes, or until it thickens.

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5. Run the custard through a sieve for extra smooth texture.
6. Cover it with a plastic wrap so that it touches the surface of the pudding to prevent a layer of film from forming on top. Chill the pudding completely.
7. Whip heavy cream until hard peaks form. And gently fold into the chilled vanilla pudding until smooth.
8. Transfer the filling into a pastry bag with star tip.
9. Cut the bananas into thin slices and layer them on the bottom half of the shells.
10. Pipe the filling and replace the top of the shells.

For the chocolate ganache

1. Bring heavy cream to a simmer in a small saucepan. Do not boil.
2. Pour the hot cream over chocolate chips, and let sit for two minutes. When chips have melted, mix well until smooth. Stir in the butter until the mixture becomes shiny.
3. Pour chocolate ganache over the filled and covered shells and serve.
4. Assembled eclairs can remain stored in the refrigerator for two days.