



THE
LITTLE FRENCH BAKERY

Croissants and Pain au Chocolat

Makes about 15 croissants or pain au chocolat

For the Dough:

5-5 1/4 cups all purpose flour (600 gms)

2 tsp salt (10 gm)

1/3 cup sugar (56 gm)

1 TBSP instant yeast

6 1/2 oz cold milk (200 gm)

1 cup water

2 TBSP soft butter

For the Folding Butter:

3 sticks cold (1 1/2 cups) unsalted butter, the best you can find

2 TBSP flour

1 egg for brushing the croissants

chocolate batons or bittersweet chocolate pieces for pain au chocolat

For the dough:

1. With a stand mixer fitted with the paddle or by hand, mix the ingredients (except cold butter and 2T flour) until shaggy.

2. Gently knead for 1-2 minutes until smooth. Dough will be sticky. Place in lightly oiled bowl, covered with plastic wrap and chill overnight.
3. The next day, cut the folding butter into ½ inch pieces, sprinkle with the 2 TBSP flour and pound between two pieces of parchment with a rolling pin or beat in mixer with flour until smooth. Be sure to keep the butter cool. Shape into a 6 x 6 inch square about ½ inch thick. Return to the refrigerator if your butter feels too soft.
4. Place the dough on your lightly floured work surface. Roll the dough into a 7x14 inch rectangle. The smaller end nearest you. Place the butter square on the bottom half of the dough, and fold the top half over the butter. Lightly seal the edges, and tap with the rolling pin to even out the thickness.
5. Roll the dough, keeping about the same width, to 15 inches in length. Fold the dough into thirds, as you would a letter. Tap the dough to even the thickness, and turn again so the fold is on the left side. You're just completed one turn!
6. Cover the dough lightly with plastic wrap and rest at room temperature for twenty minutes. If your room is warmer than 72 degrees, you can also rest the dough in the refrigerator.
7. Make two more turns (waiting at least 20 minutes between turns). Remember, if your room isn't too warm, you don't need to return to the refrigerator after each turn. Each time you fold the dough, you're making more and more layers of butter and dough. When the butter heats and melts in the oven, the water in the butter will become steam. The steam pushes the layers of dough apart creating the flaky light layers of the croissants.

9. For croissants, roll the dough into an 6 x 18 inch rectangle. Cut triangles with a bottom width of about 3 inches. Roll the triangle to lengthen, cut a 1/2 inch slit on the bottom edge. Starting at the bottom, roll the dough towards the point, gently stretching the dough. Use both hands, splaying them apart as you roll. The slit will help widen the the dough and create a traditional shape. It will take about 3-4 rolls to reach the end. Place the croissants on a parchment lined baking sheet, point side down.

For pain au chocolat, roll rectangles measuring 3x4 inches. Place a chocolat baton or a line of chocolate in a row at the smaller ends. Roll/fold each end the dough toward the center, then each end once again. This will create a scroll shape. Place the dough smooth side up, rolls down, on the baking sheet.

10. Finish shaping the dough, cover and allow the pastries to rise at room temperature for 1 hour. While the dough is rising, preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. Just before baking, beat the egg in a small bowl with a fork. With a pastry brush, gently brush the tops of the croissants with egg wash. Try not let the egg to drip down the sides of the croissant onto the pan. This limits the puff in the oven.

11. Bake at 350 degrees F, for 30 minutes. Rotate pan 1/2 way through if necessary. Transfer pan to a cooking rack, and allow pastries to cool at least thirty minutes. If you serve the croissants too soon, the butter will not cooled, and the pastry will have a greasy feel and taste.

Adapted from Artisan Breads Every Day, Peter Reinhardt