

Mille-Feuille (Napoleon Pastry) with Vanilla Pastry Cream and Marbled Icing

Crisp, flaky layers of puff pastry sandwich clouds of vanilla crème légère, finished with a classic marbled vanilla-and-chocolate icing for an elegant, patisserie-style dessert.

Ingredients

- whole milk
- granulated sugar
- cornstarch
- egg yolks
- unsalted butter
- vanilla extract
- vanilla bean (split and scraped (optional))
- salt
- heavy cream (whipped)
- puff pastry sheets (thawed if frozen (or homemade rough puff, chilled))
- vanilla icing (thick for spreading)
- dark or semi-sweet baking chocolate (melted for marbling)

Instructions

1. Make pastry cream: Whisk egg yolks and cornstarch together in a heatproof bowl until smooth.
2. Heat milk and granulated sugar in a saucepan until just simmering; remove from heat.
3. Temper the yolk mixture by slowly whisking in the hot milk mixture in a thin stream.
4. Strain the mixture back into the saucepan through a fine-mesh sieve to remove any solids.
5. Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until it reaches a full boil and thickens.
6. Remove from heat; whisk in butter, vanilla extract, vanilla bean (if using), and a pinch of salt.
7. Transfer to a bowl, press plastic wrap directly on the surface, and chill for at least 3 hours or overnight.
8. Whip heavy cream to soft peaks, then fold into the chilled pastry cream to make crème légère; chill 1 hour.
9. Prepare puff pastry: Roll thawed store-bought puff pastry or chilled homemade rough puff to an even rectangle; transfer to a lined baking sheet and dock all over with a fork.
10. Place parchment over the pastry, set a second baking sheet on top, and weigh with pie weights or dried beans; bake 20 minutes.

11. Remove top sheet and weights; continue baking uncovered 7–9 minutes until deeply golden; cool completely.
12. Trim edges and cut pastry into 15 equal squares to yield 5 pastries of 3 layers each.
13. Ice the tops: Place 5 pastry squares on a rack, spread each with thick vanilla icing.
14. Pipe or drizzle melted dark/semi-sweet chocolate in stripes, then drag a toothpick perpendicularly to create a chevron pattern; let set.
15. Assemble: Place one plain pastry square on a board and pipe 9 dollops of crème légère (a 3-by-3 grid).
16. Top with a second plain square; repeat piping 9 dollops of cream.
17. Finish with a decorated, iced top layer.
18. Refrigerate assembled pastries, uncovered, for at least 30 minutes to set before serving.
19. Serve chilled and enjoy.

Tags: Dessert, French, Pastry, Puff Pastry, Custard, Advanced

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