

Baking Basics

CROISSANT

500g Strong white flour (T65)

80g sugar

10g (1.5 tsp) salt

10g fresh or dried yeast

300ml (approx) warm water

250g chilled sweet butter

Method

Mixing: Add flour to bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in yeast. Add sugar. Add salt, but keep it away from yeast. Pour in a little water to center well to activate yeast. Slowly add remaining water and mix until soft dough is achieved and it comes away from the edge of the bowl. Remove from bowl and knead for 15 minutes. If using a mixer, mix for 5 minutes on medium speed. Take butter and flatten out into a rectangle shape. Cut in half. Now take your mixed dough and roll out into a rectangle shape. Add half the butter to the center of the dough and fold in bottom half of dough to cover the butter. Pinch and trap in air. Add second half of butter on top of the first part, and fold over the top part of the dough to encase the butter. Pinch down to trap air.

Lamination Process: Roll out dough into a long rectangle shape. Fold in bottom half to center. Fold in top half to cover. Turn and roll out again into a rectangle shape, avoid adding too much pressure when rolling. Repeat folding process. Place in ziplock bag & freeze for a max 15 minutes. Repeat lamination process & freezing twice more. For best results, leave dough in refrigerator overnight.

Shaping: Take dough and cut in half. Roll the first half into a long rectangle shape about 7 mm thick. Take a knife or pizza cutter and cut into 6-8 triangles. Hold down the wide base of the triangle and gently tug the opposite thin end. Now starting at the thick end, roll up into a croissant shape. For a traditional crescent shape turn the ends in slightly.

Place on baking tray with parchment paper allowing space between each croissant. Egg wash your croissants. Leave to rest at room temperature for 2 hours until doubled in size.

Preheat oven at 200°C or gas mark 6. Bake croissants for 15-20 minutes until golden brown.

Variations: Once you know the croissant method, you can add all sorts of flavors, sweet or savory. Pain au chocolat, almond, cheese, cheese & bacon, onion...the list goes on.

Danish Pastry: Add 2 eggs to the recipe & you have danish pastry dough.

Freezing: If you prepare your croissant shapes, egg wash them and freeze them. You can then take them out as you want. To have them for your breakfast the next day remove from the freezer the night before. Place them on a baking tray & leave on the worktop overnight. When you get up preheat your oven, then bake.