

PÂTE À CROISSANT/CROISSANT DOUGH

For 12-14 croissants

Note: this recipe assumes you are familiar with the steps involved in making laminated dough: the enveloping of the butter in the dough (*beurrage*) followed by the folds and turns. There are many recipe variations out there – it's up to you to develop a method that works for you.

There are many online sources/videos showing *beurrage* and folding methods.

I strongly recommend weighing your ingredients – grams are more precise than ounces. There are a number of digital scales available for the home baker – OXO Good Grips and Escali are two with which I'm familiar.

***Détrempe*/dough**

- 500 g / scant 4 cups all purpose flour (option 450 g all purpose + 50 g bread flour)
- 8 g instant yeast
- 44 g / scant ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 10 g / 2 teaspoons salt
- 315 ml whole milk (option: half water and half milk)
- 50 g / 3.5 tablespoons unsalted butter, soft

***Beurrage*/butter block**

- 283 g / 10 ounces unsalted butter

1. Place flour, yeast, sugar and salt in the bowl of a 5 or 6 quart stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Give it a brief mix to blend.
2. Add the milk and stir with a rubber spatula to initiate the blending then mix on low while adding the soft butter.
3. Once everything is incorporated and the dry ingredients have been picked up from the bottom of the bowl, place on low (speed 2 if using a KitchenAid) and knead for 4 minutes.
4. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface, cover with film wrap and let rest at room temperature for 45 minutes.
5. Give the dough a fold, form a ball, wrap tightly with film wrap and refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight.
6. Place the butter for the *beurrage* between layers of film wrap, tap with a rolling pin and form a square of approximately 5 inches. Hold in the fridge until ready to

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envelope it in the dough. NOTE: the butter should remain cool yet malleable – I typically take my butter block out of the fridge 15-20 minutes ahead of the *beurrage* to let it warm a bit.

7. Perform the *beurrage* then proceed with the first three-fold (also referred to as a business letter fold). Wrap the dough and let it rest in the fridge for 30-45 minutes. Perform two more business letter folds remembering to turn the dough 90° before rolling it out for each fold and letting the dough rest 30 minutes between each.
8. Once all folds are completed, wrap and refrigerate the dough for at least one hour or up to 12 hours before rolling it out for final cutting and shaping.
9. You can also freeze the dough for up to one month. Take it out and thaw it in the fridge overnight before use.

A note about whole-wheat croissants: I've had good results replacing my all purpose/bread flour with 300 g whole-wheat pastry flour + 200 g white whole-wheat flour. Just adjust the liquid (milk and/or water) in the recipe upward by 35 ml since the wheat bran absorbs more liquid, plus let the dough sit 20 minutes after initial mixing to hydrate before starting to knead.

A few tips:

1. 65-68° is a good kitchen temperature in which to work with laminated dough.
2. Dough and butter should remain cool. If butter breaks through or the dough/butter become too soft, wrap and chill for 10-15 minutes to firm things back up.
3. Frequently lift and fluff the dough as you work, lightly flouring the work surface as needed to prevent sticking. Brush excess flour from the dough before doing the folds.
4. If the dough resists you, cover it and let it rest 5-10 minutes before proceeding.

Making croissants

When it's time to actually make your croissants, roll the dough to approximately 9" x 24" (for 12 croissant). As you work, the dough will reach a point where it may resist you – if so, cover it with plastic wrap and let it rest a few minutes before continuing. Remember to lift and fluff the dough periodically and pop it into the fridge or freezer for 10-15 minutes if it gets too warm.

Once you've achieved the desired size, with the long side of the dough parallel to you, mark off 4" increments along the long edge and cut cleanly in a straight line from

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bottom to top. You'll have six 4" x 9" sections. Now cut each section diagonally from top left corner to bottom right corner to yield two triangles for a total yield of 12 triangles.

Make a $\frac{3}{4}$ " slit in the middle of the 4" base. Pick the triangle up and give it a gentle stretch then place back on the work surface with the wide base at the bottom. Flair out the ends and roll your triangle up snugly – not too loose and not too tight!

Once you've shaped the croissant, the tip side goes **DOWN** on the parchment lined sheet pan. I don't curve my croissants since I was taught that in France an all butter croissant is typically straight while a curved croissant may be made with margarine or a butter/margarine combination. Placing 9 or 10 croissants on a half sheet pan provides enough room for rising during baking. Don't crowd them!

I give the shaped croissant a light egg wash (1 large egg mixed with a tablespoon water or milk) and let them rise from 1.5 - 2 hours, depending on ambient temperature; look for an increased prominence in the laminated layers and a more jiggle-y nature to the risen croissant.

IMPORTANT: Do NOT let the croissants rise at warmer than 78° or the butter may start leaching out before baking.

It's best to have a warmish, moist environment for rising. I often use my turned off oven with a pan of warm-hottish (not burning hot or boiling) water in the bottom. If my oven is in use, I put a small cup of warm water on or next to the sheet pan on which the croissants are placed and overturn a clear tote bin over the pan to enclose them.

Just remember that every oven is different and recipe times and temps are meant to be guidelines. You have to know your oven. Your baking time may not be the same as mine.

I give the croissants a second coating of egg wash (be gentle so as not to reduce the rise) and heat my convection oven (a Kitchenaid brand) to 425°F. Just after putting the croissants in, I reduce to 400°. Baking time is around 18 minutes for me. I always check after the first 10 minutes and rotate and change positions of my trays. If I feel the tops are browning more than I like, I reduce the temp to 375°.

Look for a nicely browned exterior and a golden coloration to the laminated edges - if the edges still look pale, I reduce my temp to 350° and give them another few minutes to

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be sure the interior is properly baked. A well-baked croissant should feel light, not leaden, when you pick it up.

Let cool and enjoy!

While croissants are best eaten the day they are baked, they can be frozen once cooled. When you wish to enjoy them, take them out of the freezer and place on a parchment lined sheet pan for 20-30 minutes while you heat your oven to 325°F. Then warm them up for 12-15 minutes and *voilà* – almost like fresh!

And remember – croissant dough can be used to create all sorts of pastries. Think *pain au chocolat*, morning buns, *Kouign-amann*, windmills, twists, Danish – just use your imagination and go for it! And there are lots of online resources to help you discover how to do it all.

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