

Chocolate-Hazelnut Paris-Brest

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This Paris-Brest is particularly good because of the combination of praline cream and chocolate glaze. I love this hazelnut cream because it's a little more dense than whipped cream, thanks to the addition of kappa carrageenan (it's worth seeking out and using). Paris-Brest has so many textures—the hazelnut cream, toasted hazelnuts on top of the cream, the chocolate you dip the top of the choux pastry in, the toasted hazelnuts you sprinkle on top. It's really simple but so tasty.

Makes 24 pastries

Praline Cream

600ml / 2½ cups heavy cream

100g / ½ cup granulated sugar

75g / ¼ cup hazelnut praline paste

0.7g / 1 tsp kappa carrageenan
(see page 12)

Black Glaze

180g / 6¼ oz dark chocolate
(64% cacao)

45g / 1½ oz dark coating chocolate

160ml / ⅔ cup heavy cream

75ml / ¼ cup plus 1 Tbsp water

75g / ⅓ cup plus 1 tsp granulated
sugar

35ml / 2½ Tbsp glucose

10g / 2 Tbsp Dutch-processed cocoa
powder

24 baked Paris-Brest Pastry Shells
(page 143)

280g / 2 cups chopped hazelnuts

To make the praline cream: In a large saucepan, using an immersion blender, blend the cream, granulated sugar, hazelnut praline paste, and kappa carrageenan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.

Whisk vigorously for about 10 seconds, turn off the heat, and let the cream settle. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a container. Cover with plastic wrap, laying it directly on the surface to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate overnight to set.

To make the black glaze: Put the dark chocolate and coating chocolate in a bowl.

Put the cream, water, granulated sugar, glucose, and cocoa in a saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Carefully pour the liquid mixture over the chocolate. Mix, using an immersion blender, until the glaze is very smooth. Set aside.

Using a serrated knife, cut the baked pastry shells in half horizontally. Separate the bottoms and the tops.

Remove the praline cream from the refrigerator and whip it in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment on high speed until stiff peaks form when the whisk is lifted out of the mixture. Transfer the mixture to a pastry bag fitted with a star tip. Pipe a double ring on the bottom half of each pastry shell. Sprinkle 210g / 1½ cups of the hazelnuts over the cream mixture.

Set a sheet of parchment paper on your work surface. Dip the tops of the pastry shells into the black glaze and let the excess drip off. Set each one (chocolate-side up) on the parchment. Sprinkle the remaining 70g / ½ cup hazelnuts over the tops. Using an offset spatula, place the tops over the bottom halves and serve immediately.

NOTE

Hazelnut praline paste, glucose, kappa carrageenan, and coating chocolate are available at specialty food stores and online. Any extra black glaze can be reserved for another use, stored in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.

Pâte à Choux Dough

Makes 595g / 1 lb 5 oz (enough for 36 cream puffs or 24 éclairs)

140ml / ½ cup plus 1 1/2 Tbsp whole milk

120ml / ½ cup water

110g / ½ cup unsalted butter

5g / 1 tsp granulated sugar

5g / 1 tsp fine sea salt

130g / 1 cup plus 2 1/2 tsp bread flour

3 eggs

In a heavy-bottom pot, combine the milk, water, butter, granulated sugar, and salt and bring to a boil over medium-high heat.

Turn the heat to low. Add all of the flour at once and stir vigorously **(1)** until the dough forms a smooth and stiff ball that follows the spoon around and a thick skin forms at the bottom of the pot **(2)**. Stir for an additional 1 to 2 minutes so that the dough dries out a bit.

Transfer the dough to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and mix on medium speed to cool the dough until it is just slightly warm to the touch. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition to fully incorporate before adding the next.

The finished dough should be firm but not stiff. If you scoop up a spoonful of dough and hold the spoon vertically, it should slowly fall from the spoon, with some of the dough still clinging to the spoon. (If it doesn't fall, loosen the dough by mixing in a spoonful or two of whisked egg.)

Transfer the dough to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap, laying it directly on the surface to prevent a skin from forming. Your choux dough is now ready to use.



Paris-Brest Pastry Shells

The pastry called Paris-Brest is a ring of filled pâte à choux. Named to commemorate a bicycle race that ran between Paris and Brest, the pastry is shaped like a wheel. The pâte à choux is piped in a circle with a star tip so it has ridges when baked. The traditional filling is hazelnut cream. For my version, which uses these shells, see page 149.

Makes 24 shells

595g / 1 lb 5 oz Pâte à Choux Dough
(page 140)

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Fill a pastry bag fitted with a 1/2-inch star tip with the dough. Tape parchment paper to two baking sheets with freezer tape. Pipe 3-inch circles, 2 inches apart, onto the parchment. (At this point, you can freeze the dough. Once the circles are frozen, transfer them from the baking sheet to a covered container or resealable bag and freeze for up to 1 month; thaw in the refrigerator before baking.)

Bake the shells until they are deep golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Decrease the oven temperature to 300°F and continue to bake for an additional 15 minutes to ensure the interior is dry and the Paris-Brest shells are crunchy. Transfer to a cooling rack and cool completely. Serve or store, well wrapped, in the freezer for up to 2 weeks. Thaw at room temperature.

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