



Puff Pastry Tips

GENERAL TIPS

- Puff Pastry can be stored in the freezer in the original packaging for up to 6 months.
- Remove only as many pastry sheets as you need. Wrap unused sheets in plastic wrap or foil and return to the freezer.
- Puff Pastry can puff up to 8 times its original thickness. That means even a sheet rolled to a thin ¼-inch thickness will rise 2 inches.
- Helpful Puff Pastry tools: Rolling pin, pastry board, sharp knife and/or pizza wheel to cut dough, pastry brush, baking sheets or parchment paper.
- If you don't have a pastry brush, you can use the tip of a rolled-up paper towel or your fingertip to apply egg wash.
- Puff Pastry should be eaten within a few hours of baking. Keep filled and prepared pastry in the fridge, covered in plastic wrap, until you're ready to bake and serve.

THAWING & PREPPING PUFF PASTRY

- Don't try to manipulate Puff Pastry that's not completely thawed; unfolding it while it's still frozen could tear the sheet.
- Thawed Puff Pastry sheets should be cold to the touch but easy to manipulate. If sheets reach room temperature, return to the fridge to re chill (but not refreeze).
- The quickest way to thaw Puff Pastry is to separate the sheets, cover each with plastic wrap and leave on the counter (away from the oven) at room temperature for about 30 minutes.
- You can thaw Puff Pastry in the fridge. Separate and place each sheet on a plate, cover with plastic wrap and defrost in the refrigerator for about 4 hours.
- Once Puff Pastry is thawed, work quickly while it's still cold. You can cut it into desired shapes, then store in the fridge until you're ready for the next step.
- Puff Pastry works best when cold. So chill your tools—knife, pastry/pizza cutter, cookie cutters, even pastry board and baking pans in the fridge—while thawing your pastry.
- Use a long, heavy rolling pin to roll out your Puff Pastry dough: it helps create a pastry that's even all over and you won't have to press down too hard to roll it out.
- Avoid pressing too hard when rolling out the ends and edges—you want to avoid pressing the edge layers together, as that will prevent the pastry from rising.



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HANDLING PUFF PASTRY

- Work with one Puff Pastry sheet at a time, keeping the others in the refrigerator.
- Heat is the enemy of Puff Pastry—it handles best when cold. So avoid working with it on hot, humid days, in a stifling hot kitchen or next to your oven.
- Puff Pastry works best when cold. Your hands should be cold, too, when handling it. Run them under cold water or squeeze a plastic zipper-top bag full of ice to cool them off.
- Try to keep Puff Pastry from becoming too warm when working with it by only using your fingertips—the coolest part of your hands.
- If any cracks form while you're working with Puff Pastry, just rub with a little water and press to seal the dough together.
- Use a marble pastry board to help keep Puff Pastry cold while rolling and cutting.
- Use a floured surface to roll out your Puff Pastry sheet, but be sure to brush off excess flour before filling, cutting or folding, since flour will prevent layers from sticking together.
- When cutting Puff Pastry, the sharper the knife or pastry cutter, the better. A dull edge can cement layers together and prevent pastry from rising.
- Always cut Puff Pastry straight down, never on an angle, to prevent layers from sticking together and inhibiting the rise. Cut up and down, and don't drag the knife.
- You can brush an egg-wash glaze (1 egg plus 1 tsp. water) over the Puff Pastry to create a rich, golden sheen when baked.
- Use an egg wash to help seal filled pastries and connect Puff Pastry pieces: mix 1 egg plus 1 tsp. water, brush between layers, then pinch or press together.
- When using an egg wash, be sure it doesn't run down the cut sides of the pastry, as that will make edges stick together and stop the pastry from rising.
- If your Puff Pastry becomes soft and sticky while working with it, chill it in the fridge for a few minutes. Place in the refrigerator between rollings, too.
- To seal stuffed Puff Pastries, pinch the edges together or press with the tines of a fork, just as you'd seal a piecrust.
- Make sure the edges of your Puff Pastry are cut—a folded edge will not rise and puff.



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BAKING PUFF PASTRY

- Always preheat your oven for a minimum of 15-20 minutes before baking, because Puff Pastry depends on even heat to rise and puff. Place pastries 1 inch apart.
 - If you want a flaky thin and crispy pastry that's not very puffy, prick the unbaked Puff Pastry all over with a fork, which lets steam escape while baking.
 - For a flatter pastry without much puff—like a Napoleon—prick the dough all over with a fork, place parchment paper on top, then place 1-2 cookie sheets on top of that to weigh it down. If you're making a tart or filled Puff Pastry, place it on the baking sheet before adding toppings or fillings. That way, you won't have to transfer the dough with the extra weight and risk tearing it.
 - For extra-thin, crisp Puff Pastry, set a second baking sheet on top of the filled pastry before baking.
 - To create a tart with an extra puffy crust: take a knife and score two lines around the edge, then prick the area inside this border with a fork.
 - Puff Pastry fillings should be at room temperature. If they're hot, they can begin to melt the pastry layers, which will affect the pastry's ability to rise and puff.
 - The kind of pan you use can affect baking times. A nonstick or dark glazed baking sheet may bake faster, so adjust your time and check pastry while baking.
 - When baking Puff Pastry, note that it's done when it's golden and puffy, not wet and doughy.
- Use the baking time in the recipe as a guideline, and rely on your eyes as well.
 - You can bake Puff Pastry on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. For a more even rise, place a sheet of parchment paper on top of your pastry as well.
 - How to tell if Puff Pastry is done baking? Take a sharp knife and nick off a teensy piece to test for crispness and flakiness.
 - Always use a preheated conventional oven to bake Puff Pastry, never a microwave or toaster oven, as they can't achieve the right golden puffy effect.
 - If bubbles appear on the surface while baking Puff Pastry, prick with a fork to deflate them.
 - Always flip and place the cut side of the Puff Pastry down on the baking sheet.



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SERVING & DECORATING PUFF PASTRY

- A lattice pattern can be created by topping the Puff Pastry with a metal cooling rack, then turning it at a right angle halfway through the baking.
- You can use a fluted ravioli cutter or cookie cutters to create decorative edges or shapes. To create circles, use a plate, bowl or water glass and trace with a knife.
- You can use scraps to make cookies by sprinkling sugar and cinnamon on top before baking; or make cheese straws by doing the same with grated Parmesan and chopped fresh herbs.
- Puff Pastry scraps can be twisted into shapes and cut with cookie cutters to make pastry decorations, but don't re-roll together with your dough, as it will not rise properly.
- To add special texture and flavor, sprinkle chopped nuts, seeds, ground spices or grated cheese on top.
- When serving Puff Pastry, cut with a serrated knife for the most even, attractive presentation.

TIPS FOR PUFF PASTRY SHELLS

- Remove as many Puff Pastry shells from the package as needed. Rewrap any unused pastry shells in plastic wrap or foil and return to the freezer.
- Place Puff Pastry shells on ungreased baking sheets with "top" facing up. Place pastry shells about 2 inches apart on baking sheet.
- Always bake Puff Pastry shells in a preheated 400°F oven. Do not bake shells in a microwave or a toaster oven.
- Return shells to oven 3 to 5 minutes for extra crispness. The top works well as a garnish. Unfilled baked Puff Pastry shells may be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days.
- To recrisp Puff Pastry shells, place them in a 400° F oven for 5 minutes.
- To ensure that Puff Pastry shells will rise evenly, score the sides horizontally with a small knife.