

Gougères

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Cheesy, crisp, airy, and delicate, gougères are a great choice for entertaining since they can be thrown together quickly before a party or prepared in advance and recrisped. They begin with a traditional choux paste, which we made by cooking water, butter, and flour until a dough formed. Then we used the food processor to beat in two eggs plus an extra egg white. The added white improves crispness and provides more water, which turns to steam and helps the gougères puff even more, and its proteins provide better structure for more airiness. Most gougères lack cheese flavor, but we packed an extra ounce of Gruyère into our puffs.



INGREDIENTS

- 2** large eggs plus 1 large white
- ¼** teaspoon salt
- ½** cup water
- 2** tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- ½** cup (2 1/2 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 4** ounces Gruyère cheese, shredded (1 cup)

INSTRUCTIONS

Use a Gruyère that has been aged for about one year. The doubled baking sheets prevent the undersides of the puffs from overbrowning. Alternatively, loosely roll up an 18 by 12-inch piece of aluminum foil, unroll it, and set it in a rimmed baking sheet. Cover the foil with a sheet of parchment paper and proceed with the recipe. In step 4, the dough can be piped using a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch plain tip. For tips on how to use a pastry bag, see page 30.

1. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 425 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and nest it in second rimmed baking sheet. In 2-cup liquid measuring cup, beat eggs and white and salt until well combined. (You should have about ½ cup egg mixture. Discard excess.) Set aside.

2. Heat water, butter, and cayenne in small saucepan over medium heat. When mixture begins to simmer, reduce heat to low and immediately stir in flour using wooden spoon. Cook, stirring constantly, using smearing motion, until mixture is

MAKES 24 PUFFS

very thick, forms ball, and pulls away from sides of saucepan, about 30 seconds.

3. Immediately transfer mixture to food processor and process with feed tube open for 5 seconds to cool slightly. With processor running, gradually add reserved egg mixture in steady stream, then scrape down sides of bowl and add Gruyère. Process until paste is very glossy and flecked with coarse cornmeal-size pieces of cheese, 30 to 40 seconds. (If not using immediately, transfer paste to bowl, press sheet of greased parchment directly on surface, and store at room temperature for up to 2 hours.)

4. Scoop 1 level tablespoon of dough. Using second small spoon, scrape dough onto prepared sheet into 1½-inch-wide, 1-inch-tall mound. Repeat, spacing mounds 1 to 1¼ inches apart. (You should have 24 mounds.) Using back of spoon lightly coated with vegetable oil spray, smooth away any creases and large peaks on each mound.

5. Bake until gougères are puffed and upper two-thirds of each are light golden brown (bottom third will still be pale), 14 to 20 minutes. Turn off oven; leave gougères in oven until uniformly golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes (do not open oven for at least 8 minutes). Transfer gougères to wire rack and let cool for 15 minutes. Serve warm. (Cooled gougères can be stored in airtight container at room temperature for up to 24 hours or frozen in zipper-lock bag for up to 1 month. To serve, crisp gougères in 300-degree oven for about 7 minutes.)

Two Tricks to Prevent Burnt Bottoms

Baking the gougères on the upper rack of the oven helps mitigate the bottoms' exposure to heat, but so does creating an air gap beneath the puffs. You can do this in either of the following ways:

Nest Baking Sheets

Nesting two rimmed baking sheets creates a thin air gap between them that keeps the top sheet cooler.



Line Sheet with Crinkled Foil

If you don't have two baking sheets, you can create multiple tiny air gaps by lining the sheet with crinkled foil before covering it with parchment.