

Comte Caramel Croquembouche

Prep: 1 hour 30 min. | Cook: 1 hr. | Total: 2 hr. 10 min. | Makes 40 cheese puffs

A golden tower of savory cheese pastries



Ingredients:

For the Filling:

- 1 small bunch Leeks
- 1 small bunch Chives
- ½ cup Parsley
- 1 small bunch Baby spinach
- 12 oz. Calabro Fresh Ricotta, 1.5 lb.
- 4 oz. Pecorino Romano
- 2 Tbsp. Unsalted butter
- ½ tsp. Black pepper
- 2 tsp. Kosher salt

For The Pastry:

- 1 cups Whole milk
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) Unsalted butter
- 1 tsp. Kosher salt
- 1 ¾ cups All Purpose Flour
- 7 eggs + 1 yolk
- ½ lb. Murray's Parmigiano Reggiano, grated

For the Comte Caramel:

- 1 ½ cup Sugar
- 1 Tbsp. Corn syrup
- ½ cup Water
- 1 tsp. Sea salt
- ½ lb. Murray's 18 Month Aged Comte

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F and line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a medium saucepan, bring the milk, butter, salt and 1 cup of water to a boil over medium heat, stirring every so often.
3. Add the flour and reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring constantly, until the dough forms a homogenous ball and pulls away from the sides of the pot and leaves a thin film on the bottom and sides of the pot, roughly 2 minutes.
4. Remove the dough and place in a large mixing bowl. Allow it to cool for a few minutes before adding the eggs, one by one and stirring vigorously until each is fully incorporated before adding the next.

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5. Add the grated Parm, stirring to incorporate, before spooning the dough into a large pastry bag fitted with a round 1" nozzle or Ziploc plastic bag, to which you will snip about a quarter inch off the end.
6. Pipe the dough into 1 ½" rounds. Be sure to pipe so that the dough does not spread out, rather grows taller. These rounds should be roughly 2" apart.
7. Whisk the remaining egg yolk with a tbsp of water and use a pastry brush to apply the egg wash to each round.
8. Transfer the sheets to the oven and immediately reduce the heat to 350 F. Bake for 15 minutes and rotate the pans from top to bottom to ensure even baking.
9. Bake for another 15-20 minutes until the puffs are a deep golden brown color and sound hollow when tapped. Transfer to a wire rack and allow the puffs to cool.
10. To make the filling, begin by roughly chopping the leeks and cooking them in butter for 5-7 minutes, until softened and slightly browned. Remove from the heat and allow the leeks to cool.
11. In a food processor, blend the chives, parsley and fresh spinach until they form a thick paste. Add the ricotta and Pecorino Romano and blend to incorporate. Finally, add the cooked leeks, black pepper and salt and blend until the entire mixture is smooth and evenly incorporated.
12. Transfer the filling to another pastry bag fitted with a fine tip. Once the puffs have cool completely, use the pastry tip nozzle to puncture a hole in the backside of each to pipe roughly a tablespoon of filling into the puff. Repeat with all remaining puffs and set aside.
13. To make the caramel, combine the sugar, corn syrup and water in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring the dissolve. Increase the heat to medium-high and cook the syrup for 10-15 minutes until it turns a light amber color.
14. Remove from the heat and submerge the bottom of the saucepan in ice water to halt the cooking process.
15. Begin to assemble your croquembouche by choosing the 5 or 6 largest puffs, dipping them in the caramel and arranging them on their side to form one large circle in the center of a large serving dish. Use the caramel to glue each puff to the plate and to its neighboring puffs.
16. Continue to build the height of the tower by assembling circles of puffs, each slightly smaller than the last until you reach the point where the cone is nearly formed and need only be topped with one or two remaining puffs.
17. If the caramel cools during this assembly process, gently rewarm to achieve desired consistency.
18. Finally, take a small fork and dip into the slightly cool caramel, dragging the fork around the croquembouche. You'll notice wisps of caramel follow the fork and will create a web-like structure that encircles the tower. Finely grate the Comte over the croquembouche and serve.