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## Try This At Home Series

May 19, 2020



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### **Having a Blast with Blitz Puff Pastry**

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Mitch: The practical exam for the Certified Viennoiserie Baker program includes blitz puff pastry. Candidates mix and fold the dough to fabricate palmiers and an apple galette. The dough and the products are included in the exam to measure precision and time management. The formula size is small enough that the mixing and the sheeting/folding can be done by hand or machine. Because everything is laid bare, palmiers and apple galettes are good products to assess.

I have a special fondness for both products. Palmiers are an architectural marvel and apple galettes are my favorite marriage of fruit and pastry. With their sophisticated simplicity, both escape rustic categorization. Neither requires masking or camouflaging. No icings, glazes, or gold leaf are necessary to enhance their appeal. Or sprinkles. Hello? Did I write that loud enough? Kristen? Did the sprinkle fairy visit?

Palmiers are simply made and eaten; however, they reveal a baker's integrity and commitment. They are a standard that hasn't been subjected to multiple reinterpretations. Like chouquettes, palmiers celebrate humble ingredients and solid technique. Flaky layers rendered crisp by buttery caramel should be plentiful and pronounced. Slightly darkened edges and a shellacked surface that shatters are testimony to a bold bake. Its symmetrical shape and pattern owe their beauty to a skilled hand.

The exam also mandates one apple galette to test the candidate's knife and hand skills. The dough is sheeted thin and docked. The apples are arranged uniformly and sprinkled with sugar and a few dots of butter. A thin application of apricot nappage seals the deal. I appreciate the straightforwardness of apple galettes. Everything is unadorned and free of embellishments (including cinnamon).

At first glance, blitz puff pastry simplifies the simple. Making puff pastry dough is simple; it is not easy. Making blitz puff pastry is simpler, but not easier. Attention to detail and precision guarantee results that are reasonably close to those achieved with traditional puff pastry.

Marina Brancely, a colleague at Johnson & Wales, makes products of extraordinary quality with blitz puff pastry. The resemblance to traditional puff pastry is remarkable. I observed her class to study her technique. Rather than folding the dough for the first turn, she forms a rectangle and divides it in the center. She stacks the two halves and begins rolling and folding. It makes sense. Everything else she does is by the book, just better. I have adopted that first step. It's a small thing, but it's still a thing.

Blitz puff pastry is quick, simple, and versatile with predictable results. Just keep it simple.



Kristen: Now, I'll be honest with you. When I heard blitz puff was on the Viennoiserie certification exam, I was a little turned off by its inclusion. It didn't feel like bread and it didn't feel like something we should spend our time practicing.

Fast forward to competition day at IBIE 2019 and here I found myself forced to face the blitz puff.

I did not make blitz puff before and I definitely did not make it in college. What I did make in the course "Classic French Pastry" was a few batches of hand laminated puff pastry and I totally disliked it. The whole class threw me off. I was uninspired by a lot of things but especially by the lack of yeast in my laminated dough. It felt lifeless and boring compared to croissants and danish. The course made me question my commitment to baking as a career path entirely. Also the loneliness of freshman year was starting to creep in, the longest stretch of time away from my home yet. And if I wasn't doing something I absolutely loved and I felt extra isolated.

It was the only class in my entire career at JWU, I got less than an A in. Looking back, this was also the time when my co author was out on leave for the entire term. Two facts that might have actually been related upon further reflection.

I kept pushing through and my next class, "Pies & Tarts" revived me. Hands on, full of love and far less precise. Blitz puff is a bridge between these worlds.

Since I had no previous experience in blitz-ing, I took a full student mode approach to this piece of the competition. I took videos and notes as Solveig moved the rolling pin decisively. Less than a week after our return from the show, I busted out the recipe and my rolling pin. Instantly, I was hooked. It was fun, simple and easy to fit in between whatever else was going on at home or at work. And best of all, it's extremely versatile. Oh, and it tasted like butter.

I always throw in some whole grain flour and for this home bake it was 35% whole yecora roja flour. As the rain picked up outside I scoured the fridge for dinner ideas.

Pesto Pinwheels, nah.

Vegetable Tart, not enough soft cheese around.

A pot pie, oh yes.

And then for dessert, the reason I proposed this topic in the first place. A childhood favorite knock-off, my gourmet-makes version of Toaster Strudels. Filled with the leftover mixed berry and rhubarb jam from challah week. And topped with that signature white icing.

And yes, I put sprinkles on some, because I could.



## BLITZ PUFF DOUGH

Ingredient	Bakers %	Kg
Bread Flour	100.0%	0.322
Salt	2.0%	0.006
Unsalted Butter, Cold & Cubed	100.0%	0.322
Water, Cold	54.0%	0.174
TOTALS	256.0%	0.824

Item	Qty	Weight	Total
Palmier	10	0.050	0.500
10" Galette	1	0.300	0.300
TOTAL YIELD:			0.824

### MIXING NOTES:

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1. Mix the flour and salt together using the paddle.
2. Add the butter and mix on first speed until the butter forms shards
3. Add the water and mix on first speed only until the dough begins to come together as a shaggy mass.
4. Turn the dough onto a floured surface and shape into a block.
5. Give the dough two book folds, refrigerate 20-30 minutes.
6. Give the dough another two book folds.
7. Refrigerate for at least one hour before using.

### PALMIER:

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1. Sheet dough to 1/8" thick and cut a 12 x 15" strip.
2. Mist with cool water and sprinkle with the sugar mixture (equal parts powdered and granulated sugar).
3. Rub in the sugar, flip over, mist and rub with more sugar.
4. Flip for a third time and rub in a last layer of sugar.
5. Orient the dough with the short side close to you and fold in 1.5" from east and west edges.
6. Make a second fold 1.5" from east and west edges.
7. Fold over on itself and chill.
8. Cut 1/4 " slices and tray with 3" between to allow for expansions.
9. Bake at 390F until caramelized, flip over and return to oven for 30 seconds.

### GALETTES:

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1. Using 300 g dough, sheet dough to 12" round.
2. Fill with pastry cream and top with peeled and 1/8" sliced apples.
3. Fold edges over the top - finished diameter should be 10".
4. Egg wash and sugar the edges.
5. Bake at 425F in the deck oven, reducing heat as necessary during the bake.
6. Finish the galette with apricot glaze (nappage).