

## MASTER RECIPE Danish Pastry

For the Danish dough

**2 packages (5 teaspoons)  
active dry yeast**

**1/3 cup (3 oz/90 g) sugar**

**1/2 cup (4 fl oz/125 ml)  
warm water (105–115°F/  
40–46°C)**

**1 teaspoon salt**

**1/2 teaspoon ground  
cardamom (optional)**

**1/4 cup (2 oz/60 g) unsalted  
butter, melted**

**1 large whole egg, plus  
2 large egg yolks**

**1 cup (8 fl oz/250 ml)  
whole milk**

**1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
(essence)**

**3 1/2 cups (17 1/2 oz/545 g)  
all-purpose (plain) flour,  
plus extra as needed**

For the butter package

**1 cup (8 oz/250 g)  
unsalted butter**

**1/4 cup (1 1/2 oz/45 g)  
all-purpose (plain) flour**

In a small bowl, dissolve the yeast and a pinch of the sugar in the warm water. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes.

**BY HAND:** In a large bowl, using a wire whisk, whisk together the remaining sugar, the salt, cardamom (if using), melted butter, and eggs. Whisk in the milk, vanilla, and the yeast mixture. Using a wooden spoon, gradually stir in the flour, 1/2 cup (2 1/2 oz/75 g) at a time, and mix just until the dough clings together in a rough mass. If the dough is still very soft, add up to 1/4 cup (1 1/2 oz/45 g) additional flour.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and pat into a rectangle about 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick. Place on a half-sheet pan, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until chilled, about 45 minutes.

To make the butter package (page 256), using a rolling pin or the heel of your hand, beat or knead the butter on a work surface to flatten it and warm it to about 60°F (16°C). Sprinkle the butter with the flour and gently beat the butter with the rolling pin to press the flour into the butter. Shape the butter into an 8-by-7-inch (20-by-18-cm) rectangle. If the butter has become too warm, wrap and refrigerate just until firm but still pliable (60°F/16°C).

To laminate the dough (page 257), on a lightly floured work surface, roll out the dough into a 10-by-16-inch (25-by-40-cm) rectangle. With a short side facing you, place the butter on the lower half, leaving a 1-inch (2.5-cm) border on all sides. Fold over the upper half to cover the butter and press the edges together to seal. Then, with a folded side to your left, roll out the dough into a 12-by-20-inch (30-by-50-cm) rectangle. With a short side facing you, fold the bottom third up, then fold the top third down, as if folding a letter. This completes the first turn. Return to the pan, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 15 minutes.

Return the chilled dough to the lightly floured work surface with a folded side to your left and repeat the process to make 3 more turns, rolling, folding, and chilling the dough each time, for a total of 4 turns. After the final turn, refrigerate the dough for at least 1 1/2 hours or for up to overnight before shaping.

**BY STAND MIXER:** In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the remaining sugar, salt, cardamom (if using), melted butter, eggs, milk, and vanilla and mix on medium speed until combined. Add the yeast mixture and then add the flour, 1/2 cup (2 1/2 oz/75 g) at a time, and mix just until the dough clings together in rough mass. If it is still very soft, add up to 1/4 cup (1 1/2 oz/45 g) flour.

Danish pastry is a yeasted dough similar to croissant dough, but enriched with eggs and sugar. Like croissant and puff pastry, the technique of rolling and folding the dough so that it is interlaced with butter creates wonderfully flaky layers. The preparation is easy and fun once mastered, and the dough can be fashioned into a variety of pastries of different shapes. All of the Danish pastry recipes in this book call for 1 lb (500 g) of dough, or half of this recipe. You can use the extra to make pinwheels (page 273) or other shapes and freeze the formed and unbaked pastries. Simply line them up on a half-sheet pan, wrap the pan tightly with plastic wrap, and store in the freezer for up to 1 week. Bring the pastries to room temperature and let them rise to double in size as directed in the recipe before baking.

MAKES 1 LARGE BRAID OR 6 SERVINGS

## Chocolate Danish Braid

### 1 lb (500 g) Danish Pastry Dough (page 270)

For the filling

**1/2 cup (4 oz/125 g) granulated sugar**

**1/4 cup (1 1/2 oz/45 g) all-purpose (plain) flour**

**2 tablespoons unsalted butter**

**2 tablespoons Dutch-process cocoa powder**

**1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**

**1 large egg white**

**1 large egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water**

**Sliced (flaked) almonds and/or coarse sugar or Vanilla Glaze (page 68)**

Here, Danish pastry dough encases a chocolate streusel filling in an elaborate lattice-topped braid. This pastry looks complex, but once the dough is made and chilled, the braid is easily shaped by crisscrossing strips of dough over the filling. Use a rimmed half-sheet pan in case the butter oozes out during baking.

Prepare the Danish Pastry Dough and refrigerate to chill as directed.

Line a half-sheet pan with parchment (baking) paper, or butter lightly.

**BY HAND:** To make the filling, in a bowl, combine the granulated sugar, flour, butter, cocoa, and cinnamon and mix together with a pastry blender or your fingers until fine crumbs form. Stir in the egg white just until evenly blended.

**BY FOOD PROCESSOR:** To make the filling, combine the granulated sugar, flour, butter, cocoa, and cinnamon. Process until fine crumbs form. Add the egg white and process just until the mixture is evenly blended.

On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the pastry into a rectangle about 14 inches (35 cm) long, 9 inches (23 cm) wide, and 1/4 inch (6 mm) thick. Spread the filling down the center third of the rectangle. Using a sharp knife, cut diagonal strips 1 1/4 inches (3 cm) wide down the outside of the pastry on both sides of the filling, cutting almost through to the filling. Cut off the first and last strip on both sides so that a flap is formed at the top and bottom.

Fold the flaps over onto the filling. Starting at the top, fold the strips over the filling alternately from each side at an angle. When you get to the end, tuck the overhang of the last few strips underneath the braid to form a seal. Using a wide metal spatula, carefully transfer the pastry to the prepared pan. Place in a warm, draft-free spot, cover loosely with a kitchen towel, and let the braid rise until doubled in size, 30–40 minutes.

Position a rack in the middle of the oven, and preheat to 425°F (220°C).

Lightly brush the braid with the egg mixture. Sprinkle with sliced almonds and/or coarse sugar, or leave plain if using the Vanilla Glaze.

Bake the pastry for 15 minutes. Reduce the heat to 375°F (190°C) and continue baking until golden brown and puffed, 15–20 minutes longer. Check the braid during baking, and if it turns brown early, cover with aluminum foil during the last minutes of baking. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool on the pan for 10 minutes, then transfer the braid to the rack and let cool completely. If using, drizzle the braid with Vanilla Glaze just before slicing.

### VARIATIONS

#### Frangipane Danish Braid

Omit the chocolate-streusel filling. Fill the braid with Frangipane (page 309).

#### Danish Braid with Berry Pastry Cream

Omit the chocolate-streusel filling. Mix 1/2 cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) Pastry Cream (page 309) with 1/4 cup (2 1/2 oz/75 g) raspberry or blackberry jam. Fill the braid with the berry pastry cream mixture.

#### Danish Braid with Apricot Pastry Cream

Omit the chocolate-streusel filling. Mix 1/2 cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) Pastry Cream (page 309) with 1/4 cup (2 oz/60 ml) Apricot Filling (page 273). Fill the braid with the apricot pastry cream mixture.