

SWEET MASCARPONE MINI CREAM PUFFS WITH MORELLO CHERRY COGNAC SAUCE

INGREDIENTS

for the Choux Pastry

1/2 cup all purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon granulated white sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup unsalted butter
1/2 cup water
2 large eggs, lightly beaten

for the Filling

1 cup mascarpone
3 tablespoons confectioners sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup heavy whipping cream
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

for the Morello Cherry Cognac Sauce

2 cups jarred pitted morello cherries, with juice
1 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons corn starch mixed with 4 tablespoons cold water
4 tablespoons cognac

DIRECTIONS

For the Choux Pastry: Preheat oven to 400F. Line a baking sheet with silpat or parchment paper.

In a bowl sift together the flour, sugar and salt. Set aside.

Place the butter and water in a heavy saucepan over medium heat and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and, with a wooden spoon or spatula, quickly add the flour mixture. Return to heat and stir constantly until the dough comes away from the sides of the pan and forms a thick smooth ball (about a minute or two). Transfer the dough to your electric mixer, or with a hand mixer, and beat on low speed a minute or two to release the steam from the dough. Once the dough is lukewarm start adding the lightly beaten eggs and continue to mix until you have a smooth thick paste. Spoon or pipe mounds of dough onto the baking sheet, spacing them a couple of inches apart.

Bake for 15 minutes and then reduce the oven temperature to 350F. Bake for a further 30 to 40 minutes or until the shells are a nice amber color and when split, are dry inside. Turn the oven off and, with the oven door slightly ajar, let the shells dry out for a further 10 - 15 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool on a wire rack.

While the puffs are baking and cooling, make the cherry sauce. In a blender, puree the cherries with the juice. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the pureed cherries and sugar and bring to a simmer. Add the corn starch slurry and let come to a boil to thicken, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and add in the cognac. Set aside to cool, stirring often so it doesn't become clumpy.

For the filling: In a large mixing bowl place the whipping cream, vanilla extract and stir to combine. Cover and chill the bowl and whisk in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. When chilled, whip the mixture until soft peaks form. Loosen the mascarpone and mix with the confectioners sugar and cinnamon. Once the whipped cream is made, fold the whipped cream and mascarpone mixtures together gently.

To Assemble: Split the pastry shells in half and fill (or pipe) with whipped cream. Place the top half of the pastry shell on the whipped cream and drizzle with the cognac sauce. Refrigerate until ready to serve.