

Classic Gougères

These classic gougères are cheesier than many others, with a crunchy, salty crust from a sprinkling of Parmesan just before baking. Take care to serve these straight from the oven when they are still hot and a little gooey in the center. If you want to make these ahead, you can freeze them after forming them into balls, but before baking (it's easiest to freeze them directly on the baking sheet if you've got the freezer space). Then bake them while still frozen, adding a few minutes onto the baking time.

Yield 5 1/2 dozen Time 45 minutes

Ingredients

4 tablespoons unsalted butter (1/2 stick)
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 cup/136 grams bread flour
4 large eggs, at room temperature
5 ounces/142 grams shredded Gruyère
1/3 cup/50 grams grated Parmesan cheese

Note

When making the choux pastry, it is important to be sure that each egg is fully incorporated into the batter before adding the next. Don't worry if the batter separates and looks curdled at first. Keep beating, and it will come together nicely.

Method

Heat oven to 425 degrees, and line two rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a small saucepan, bring 1 cup water, butter, salt and cayenne to a boil. Stir in flour all at once and cook, stirring continuously with a wooden spoon, until dough pulls away from the sides of the pot, 1 to 2 minutes.

Scrape dough into the bowl of an electric mixer and beat with a paddle until cooled slightly, about 30 seconds. (Or you can do this with a wooden spoon if you beat vigorously.) Add one egg at a time, letting each one incorporate before adding the next. Mix in Gruyère and continue to beat until it is mostly melted into batter.

Transfer batter to a large, sealable plastic bag, and snip off 3/4 inch from one corner. Pipe 2-teaspoon-sized balls, spaced 1-inch apart, onto baking sheets. Or use a spoon to form the balls. Sprinkle Parmesan on top, and bake for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees and continue to bake until golden and cooked through, 10 to 15 minutes. Cool slightly then serve immediately.

