

CHAMPAGNE, COMTÉ, AND FRESH THYME GOUGÈRES

A recipe by **FoodNouveau**

INGREDIENTS

Makes about two dozen 1½-in [3.8-cm] gougères

- ½ cup [125 ml] water
- ½ cup [125 ml] Champagne (see note)
- 3 tbsp [45 ml] unsalted butter, diced
- ¾ tsp [3.75 ml] salt
- 1 cup [250 ml] unbleached all-purpose flour
- 4 large eggs, chilled
- 1 cup [250 ml] finely grated Comté cheese
- ½ tsp [2.5 ml] fresh thyme leaves
- freshly ground black pepper

- 1 egg yolk beaten with 1 tbsp [15 ml] water, for glazing

METHOD

Position one oven rack in the top third, and one rack in the bottom. Preheat to 400°F [200°C]. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper.

Bring the water, Champagne, butter, and salt to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium heat, whisking until butter melts (no need to let it come to a full boil). Add the flour all at once; stir quickly with a wooden spoon until the flour absorbs all the liquid and the dough forms a ball, pulling away from the sides of the pan (this should take 30 seconds to a minute). Keep on stirring vigorously over the heat until a film forms on the bottom of the pan and dough is no longer sticky, 1 to 2 minutes longer.

Remove the pan from the heat and let the dough cool (in the pan) for 2 to 3 minutes.

Using a hand mixer, beat in the eggs in one at a time. Every time you add an egg, the mixture will first look like a glossy curdled mess, but then it will come back together. Make sure each egg is well incorporated before adding the next.

Once all the eggs are incorporated, the dough will be thick but creamy. Fold in ¾ cup [180 ml] of the grated Comté cheese, the thyme leaves, and some freshly ground black pepper using a spatula.

To form the gougères, you can use a pastry bag fitted with a round piping tip, or two spoons, or—even easier—a mini 0.75-oz [1½-tbsp] ice cream scoop, which creates perfectly round shapes every time. Drop each mound of dough about 3 inches [7.5 cm] apart on the parchment paper-lined baking sheets. The dough should be thick enough to keep its round shape. Using damp fingertips, press down any peaks of dough to create smooth puffs.



Recipe Credit: Adapted from Molly Wizenberg, with additional tips from Tara O'Brady.

Photo Credit: Marie Asselin

© 2016 Food Nouveau | <http://foodnouveau.com>

(At this point, the portioned dough can be frozen on the sheet until hard, then transferred to an airtight container and kept in the freezer until a craving comes.)

Using a pastry brush, brush the formed dough balls with the egg wash and sprinkle with the remaining ¼ cup [60 ml] Comté cheese. Bake gougères until golden brown, about 30 minutes, switching the position of the baking sheets half-way through baking. (Add a few minutes if baking from frozen—no need to thaw.) Using a small paring knife, pry open one gougère to check for doneness: the center should be slightly eggy and moist.

Let the puffs cool slightly on a rack. Serve hot or warm. Gougères can be made several hours ahead. If making ahead, let the gougères cool completely on a rack, then store at room temperature in an airtight container. Before serving, rewarm in a 350°F [175°C] oven for 5 to 10 minutes.

NOTE

No need to open a bottle of French champagne to pour a half cup for this recipe—although if you know you will pair the rest of the bottle with the gougère, by all means, indulge! You can substitute any dry sparkling wine such as Cava, Prosecco, other Champagne-style wines, or even hard cider.