

Prawn Cocktail Puffs



Makes 48

Prep 50 mins

Cooking 30 - 35 mins

Challenge

The choux dough

large disposable piping bag
2 baking sheets, lined with baking paper
100g plain flour
175ml water
1/4 tsp fine sea salt
75g unsalted butter, diced
3 medium eggs, @ room temperature, beaten to mix
beaten egg to glaze

To flavour

2 pinches
paprika
2 grinds black
pepper

The filling

400g cooked, peeled prawns
6 tbsp mayonnaise
2 tbsp tomato ketchup
1 tsp brandy
small bunch fresh chives,
finely snipped
paprika for dusting

1. Sift the flour on to a sheet of greaseproof paper. Put the water, salt and butter into a medium pan and heat gently until the butter has melted - don't let the water boil yet. Turn up the heat and quickly bring the mixture to the boil, then tip in the flour all in one go. Remove the pan from the heat and beat furiously with a wooden spoon - the mixture will look like a mess at first, but as you beat it will turn into a smooth, heavy dough. Set the pan back on low heat and beat the dough for about 2 minutes to slightly cook it until it comes away from the side of the pan in a smooth, glossy ball. Tip the dough into a large heatproof mixing bowl, or a free-standing electric mixer, and leave to cool until it is barely warm.
2. Using a hand-held electric whisk, or the mixer whisk attachment, gradually beat in the eggs, beating well after each addition, to make the dough very shiny and paste-like. It should just fall from a spoon when lightly shaken - you may not need all of the egg as the choux dough needs to remain stiff enough to pipe. (If you have any egg left, use it for glazing)
3. Flavour the choux dough by beating in the paprika and black pepper. If you are not going to use the choux immediately, cover the bowl with cling film & leave at cool room temperature for up to 4 hrs.
4. Heat the oven to 200°C/ 180 fan/ gas 6. Spoon the dough into the piping bag, and snip off the tip to make an opening 1.5 cm across. Pipe mounds about 3cm in diameter and 2.5cm high on the lined baking sheets well apart to allow for expansion. Lightly brush with beaten egg, taking care it doesn't drip down and glue the pastry to the paper, which would prevent it from rising properly.
5. Bake in a heated oven for 15 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 180°C/ Fan 160C/ gas 4. Quickly open and close the oven door (this will get rid of the steam), then bake for a further 7 mins until the choux buns are crisp and golden.
6. Remove the sheets from the oven. Use a skewer to make a small hole @ one side of each choux bun to let out the steam trapped inside, & return to the oven. Bake for a 5 mins until very crisp & firm. Transfer to a wire rack & leave until cold before filling. (Keep the buns in an airtight container for up to a day - If necessary, crisp up @ 180°C/160 C Fan/ gas 4 for 5-8 mins; cool before filling.)
7. To make the filling, drain the prawns well on kitchen paper, blotting moisture from the top too. Combine the mayonnaise, tomato ketchup, brandy and chives in a bowl and mix well. Roughly chop the prawns and add to the sauce. If you are not filling the puffs immediately, cover the bowl and keep in the fridge until needed - up to 6 hours
8. To assemble the puffs, split each choux bun horizontally, then spoon in a little of the filling and replace the lids. Arrange on serving plates, dust lightly with paprika and serve.