

the french tarte

the sweet taste of france

PÂTE À BRIOCHE/BRIOCHE DOUGH (INCLUDES CREATING A LAMINATED VERSION)

Brioche is a yeasted egg and butter enriched dough used as the base for many different pastries. Some of the classics are *brioches à tête* baked in fluted molds; *brioche Nanterre* in which the dough is divided, shaped into balls and tucked into a loaf pan for a pull-apart end result; *brioche mousseline* baked in round cans, sliced and toasted as the base for savory canapés, appetizers or desserts; caramel sticky buns; rolled/filled/braided or twisted to create coffee cakes or individual pastries – so many choices!

There are tons of brioche recipes out there and the dough can range from lean to very rich depending on how much butter and egg is added. When evaluating a brioche dough recipe, I look at the ratio of butter to flour e.g. if a recipe calls for 520 g flour, I consider approximately 260 g butter to be appropriate for a “medium” brioche, the butter being 50% the weight of the flour. The range of butter can go from 30% all the way up to 100% the weight of the flour! Now that’s rich.

The number of eggs will vary from recipe to recipe. For a medium brioche 5 or 6 large eggs is usual when the base flour amount is around 500-550 or so grams.

If you wish to laminate your brioche dough, you have options. Keep the same amount of butter in the base dough and add in about half that amount for the butter block for a richer end result OR keep the same total amount of butter in the finished dough by reducing the dough butter amount to 25% of the flour and using the other 25% for the butter block.

Base dough yield is ~1255 g / 2.76 lbs. To help you decide how might use your dough, here are just a couple of examples of specific dough needs: individual *brioches à tête* ~ 50 g each; brioche coffee cake (9-10” diameter) 454 g (1 pound). That’s just the tip of the iceberg.

When proceeding with lamination and using 125 g / 4.4 ounces butter for the butter block, the yield is ~ 1380 g / 3.04 lbs. Example of dough need: for a filled laminated brioche braided loaf in a medium loaf pan you’ll need ~ 720 g of laminated dough.

Note: All ingredients should be cold. I strongly recommend weighing rather than measuring; grams are more precise than ounces.

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Dough

- 520 g / 4 cups flour (260 g all purpose + 260 g bread flour)
 - 150 ml whole milk (can replace half with apple cider or other fruit juice if desired)
 - 5 large eggs
 - 10 g / 2 teaspoons kosher salt
 - 60 g / 4 tablespoons sugar, divided in two equal portions
 - 10 g instant yeast
 - 255 g / 9 ounces unsalted butter, cubed/cool/pliable
1. In the bowl of a 5 or 6-quart stand mixer fitted with the dough hook mix all ingredients except the butter and ½ of the sugar on low speed to incorporate.
 2. Knead on speed 2 (Kitchenaid) for 5-7 minutes.
 3. Add the second half of the sugar and mix 2 more minutes.
 4. Continuing on speed 2, add the butter bit by bit. Once all the butter is added, knead for 8-10 minutes until the dough cleans the sides of the bowl and sheets nicely. The dough should be silky, smoothly beautiful!
 5. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured bowl with plastic wrap tucked around the dough and let stand for one hour at room temperature. Fold gently, wrap tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.
 6. The following morning, divide, shape and proceed as desired. Work cool!! Keep any dough awaiting use in the fridge until ready.

If proceeding with lamination

Place the butter for the *beurrage* between layers of film wrap, tap with a rolling pin and form a square of approximately 6 inches. Hold in the fridge until ready to envelop it in the dough. NOTE: the butter should remain cool yet malleable – I typically take my butter block out of the fridge 15-20 minutes ahead of the *beurrage* to let it warm a bit.

Perform the *beurrage* then proceed with a four-fold. Wrap the dough and let it rest in the fridge for 30-45 minutes. Proceed with a three-fold. Remember to turn the dough 90° before rolling it out for each fold and letting the dough rest 30 minutes between each.

Once all folds are completed, wrap and refrigerate the dough for at least one hour or up to 12 hours before rolling it out for final cutting and shaping.

You can also freeze the dough for up to one month. Take it out and thaw it in the fridge overnight before use.

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A few tips:

1. 65-68° is a good kitchen temperature in which to work with laminated dough.
2. Dough and butter should remain cool. If butter breaks through or the dough/butter become too soft, wrap and chill for 10-15 minutes to firm things back up.
3. Frequently lift and fluff the dough as you work, lightly flouring the work surface as needed to prevent sticking. Brush excess flour from the dough before doing the folds.
4. If the dough resists you, cover it and let it rest 5-10 minutes before proceeding.

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