

Croissants (pronounced “kwa-san”)

Crescent shaped yeast breads have been around since the middle ages but the croissant as we know it now emerged in Paris in the mid 19th century. Properly prepared, a croissant is slightly crisp and flaky, light and buttery rich. For reasons not clear to me, it is difficult to mass-produce croissants and croissants purchased from large commercial bakeries never fail to disappoint. A homemade croissant though, is a joy to behold! Making croissants is a bit more time intensive than some breads but croissants are still relatively easy to make and reward the home baker mightily with a world class pastry.

I typically make croissant production a three day process. On day 1 I mix up the dough (taking 10 minutes or so). Day two involves laminating butter between the dough layers, which doesn't take much time overall but requires 2 hour breaks between folding, for a total of being around the house about 5 hours on day 2. The croissants can be cut and shaped and stored in the refrigerator on day 2 or cut and shaped on day 3 just prior to baking.

The French pronounce this as “kwa san”

Ingredients

Components

Single batch of croissant or easy Danish dough (access recipe from pastry page)

Egg wash (see below)

Egg Wash Ingredients	Amount
Large egg, slightly beaten	1
Heavy cream	2 Tbsp
Salt	pinch

Remove the dough from the refrigerator and allow it to warm up a few minute while you prepare the baking sheets. Line three baking sheets with parchment paper.

Place a single batch of dough on a floured work surface then roll the chilled dough out into a large rectangle, about 15 x 21” with the long side nearest you. Divide the dough into thirds along the long axis, making three 5 x 21” strips with the long side nearest you. Cut each strip into a triangle with a 4” or so base. Flip over each triangle and then gently stretch so that the long sides of the triangle are equal. Cut a 1” slit into the base of the triangle, then roll up and shape into a crescent, with the point on the underside. Place 2” apart on baking sheets.

Lightly beat the egg with a pinch of salt and the heavy cream. Brush the croissants with the egg wash mixture.

Cover the croissants lightly with plastic wrap and allow to rise at room temperature for about 1 hour while the oven warms up. If you are planning on baking croissants the next morning, place in a refrigerator after covering with light plastic and allow to rise in the refrigerator until the next morning.

Preheat the oven to 425 F. Remove croissants from the refrigerator if needed and allow to rest at while the oven is warming up. Brush the croissants again with egg wash. Place the sheets of croissants in the oven and turn the oven down to 400 degrees. Bake 24-28 minutes, rotating pans halfway thru baking if possible. Bake until tops are starting to turn chestnut brown. Remove from oven and cool on a wire rack.

Notes

The croissants freshen up very well in an oven or toaster oven, 350 F for 7 minutes if frozen, 4 minutes if not frozen.

Baked croissants freeze very well with freshening as outlined above. Croissant dough can be frozen but croissants made from frozen dough will be a bit smaller and more dense than ones made from fresh dough. Several hours before using the frozen dough move it from the freezer to the refrigerator.