

# Cream Puff Potluck — Production Sheet

Sunday, May 17, 2026 · 6 cooks · Dinner at 6:00pm

## Targets

- **Take-home puffs (raw, frozen):** ~96 piped (8 per household × 12), split ~48 plain + ~48 craquelin-topped
- **Dessert puffs (baked, sweet):** ~40 cream puffs + ~24 craquelin puffs, halved or pre-poked for tableside filling with **4 crèmes légères** (vanilla, mocha, Seville-blood orange marmalade, dulce de leche)
- **Gougères (savory apéro):** ~50
- **Savory éclairs (apéro):** ~48 small (3") shells, split between Sandy's salmon mousse (~24) and goat cheese with honey & thyme (~24)
- **Guest count:** 15 people

## Dough batches (~700g each)

Purpose	Batches
Teaching batch (becomes sample sheet)	1
Gougères (~50 mounds)	1.5
Small éclair shells (savory + sweet)	2
Take-home freezer puffs (~96 raw piped)	3
Dessert puffs + craquelin puffs (~64 baked)	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>~7–8</b>

Across 6 cooks in 3 pairs over ~5 hours: roughly 2.5 batches per pair, leaving room for piping, baking, tasting, and experiments.

## Shopping totals for 8 batches

- Bread flour: ~1.1 kg (5-lb bag covers it)
- Unsalted butter: ~900 g (2 pounds)
- Whole milk: ~900 ml (1 quart)
- Eggs: ~1.8 kg (3 dozen + a few extra)
- Sugar/salt: trivial

## Saturday — Day Before

- Receive Sandy's salmon mousse base (~600g) → refrigerate
- Make 1 batch goat cheese mousse (~600g) → refrigerate
- Make 1.5 batches vanilla pastry cream (~900g) → refrigerate (split four ways Sunday at flavoring time)
- Roll & freeze craquelin discs (2 batches, ~60 discs)
- Pre-measure into deli cups: bread flour (8×140g), salt, sugar, grated Gruyère
- Pre-weigh egg portions: 8× 225g into deli cups
- Clear freezer; load displaced items into pre-chilled ice chest
- Confirm 6 half-sheet pans available + stack of cooling racks
- Confirm piping kit: 4–6 bags, ½" round tip, ½" French star tip, ¼" round tip

## Sunday Morning — Before Guests Arrive

- Test-fire outside oven, calibrate at 375°F
- Set up 4 stations: liquids/saucepans, mixing/piping, oven traffic, fillings
- Lay out scales, thermometers, parchment, wooden spoons
- Pull vanilla pastry cream from fridge 30 min before to temper for whisking
- Set up 4 small bowls for splitting pastry cream into flavors (vanilla, mocha, Seville-blood orange, dulce de leche)
- Cue up ChefSteps video on tablet for reference

## Role Assignments

Pair	Members	Role
Savory team	Most experienced cooks	Gougères + savory éclairs (salmon + goat cheese)
Take-home team	Newer cooks	Repetition piping for freezer batch
Filling team	Detail-oriented cooks	Crèmes légères, craquelin, garnishing
Floater	John & Adela	Coach pairs, calibrate ovens, manage freezer

## 1:00–1:30 — Welcome & Teaching Batch (*everyone*)

- Greet, aprons on, kitchen tour, role assignments
- John makes 1 batch of dough start to finish, narrating each step
- Pass the spoon — let 2–3 people stir the panade
- Show the "smooth and glossy" finish after eggs go in (food processor)
- Pipe mixed sample sheet (puffs + small éclairs + gougères)
- Sample sheet into oven by 1:30

## 1:30–2:30 — Parallel Batches Begin

### Savory team:

- Mix 1 batch plain dough (for éclairs)
- Mix 1 batch + 100g grated Gruyère (for gougères)
- Pipe ~50 gougère mounds (1½", ½" round tip)
- Pipe ~48 small éclair logs (3", ½" French star tip)
- Egg-wash gougères, top with reserved Gruyère
- First savory sheets into oven at 2:30

### Sweet team:

- Mix 2 batches plain dough
- Two cooks: split the vanilla pastry cream four ways (~225g each), then build each flavor — leave one plain vanilla, whisk melted chocolate + dissolved espresso into the second for mocha, whisk John's Seville/blood orange marmalade into the third, whisk dulce de leche into the fourth
- Lighten each with whipped cream (~95g cream + ~28g sugar per flavor), pipe-bag with ¼" round tip, refrigerate
- Two cooks: roll & cut craquelin from frozen sheets

### Floaters:

- Coach panade temperature checks (165–175°F)
- Verify smooth-and-glossy finish on each pair's first batch
- Pull teaching batch when ready (~2:00), set out for tasting

## 2:30–3:30 — First Bakes + Freezer Push

### In the ovens:

- Gougères: indoor oven, 375°F, ~35 min
- Small éclair logs: outdoor oven, 425°F for 15 min, then drop to 375°F for ~15 min
- Watch the 15-min "no peeking" rule on each

### Take-home team:

- Mix 2 more batches plain dough
- Pipe ~48 plain mounds across 2 half-sheets
- Pipe ~48 mounds with craquelin discs across 2 half-sheets
- Sheets straight to freezer as piped (3:00–3:30)

### Filling team:

- Pull Sandy's salmon mousse base + goat cheese mousse from fridge to temper (~3:00)
- Whip 200g heavy cream to soft-medium peaks; fold into salmon base for finished mousse (~3:30)
- Whisk goat cheese mousse to loosen
- Set out éclair garnishes: dill, capers, salmon roe, cucumber, thyme, honey, microgreens

## 3:30–4:30 — Dessert Puff Bakes

- Bake dessert cream puffs (~40) — indoor oven, 375°F, 25 min
- Bake craquelin puffs (~24) — outdoor oven, 400°F → drop to 325°F, 30 min total
- Cool baked éclair shells on wire racks
- First freezer wave check at 4:00 — bag any solid sheets, free racks for second wave
- Transfer finished salmon mousse and goat cheese mousse into separate piping bags, ¼" round tip
- Set out a bowl of warm gougères for the cooks (snack break)

## 4:30–5:30 — Assembly & Bag-Up

- Poke 2 holes in bottom of each éclair shell with chopstick
- Fill ~24 shells with salmon mousse, ~24 with goat cheese mousse (~15g each)
- Garnish salmon éclairs: dill + salmon ribbon, OR cucumber + microgreen, OR roe + chives
- Garnish goat cheese éclairs: thyme leaf + honey drop, OR candied walnut, OR microgreen
- Halve dessert cream puffs, arrange on platters alongside craquelin puffs
- Set out 4 piping bags of crèmes légères for tableside dessert bar
- Bag & label remaining freezer puffs by household (Sharpie + masking tape)
- Plate gougères on warming tray
- Set out re-crisp instructions card for take-home guests

## 5:30–6:00 — Set Table & Greet

- Wipe down kitchen
- Set table — count for 13–14
- Pour wine
- Greet arriving non-cook guests
- Apéro out: gougères + salmon & goat cheese éclairs
- Receive incoming dishes (salads, veggie tortilla casserole)

## Bottleneck Watch

Time	Risk	Mitigation
3:30	Freezer rush — 4–6 sheets want in at once	Stagger by 10 min; keep ice chest closed
4:00	Both ovens running dinner bakes	Savory done by now; sweet & craquelin share indoor
4:30	Cold mousses won't pipe smoothly	Pull both mousses from fridge at 3:00
4:45	Take-home bagging while fillings	Filling team handles éclairs; take-home team

## Re-Crisp Card (*for take-home guests*)

**From-frozen instructions** — bake on parchment-lined sheet, no thawing.

- **Plain puffs:** 425°F for 15 min, then 375°F for 15–20 min until deep golden
- **Craquelin puffs:** 400°F for 15 min, then 325°F for 15 min, then door cracked open 10 min
- Cool, then split and fill with whipped cream, pastry cream, or ice cream

## Quick Reference: Bake Temps

Item	Temp	Time
Cream puffs	375°F	25 min + 15 min dry
Gougères	375°F	35 min + 5 min dry
Small éclairs	425° → 375° after 15 min	25–30 min total
Choux au craquelin	400° → 325° (no peek)	15+15 min + 15 min dry

## Quick Reference: Doneness Signals

- **Panade ready:** 165–175°F, films pan bottom
- **Cool dough to:** 140–145°F before adding eggs
- **Eggs in (food processor):** ~30s, scrape, ~30s more — finished dough is smooth, glossy, homogeneous
- **Puffs done:** deep golden brown, hollow when tapped