

JAMES MARTIN

sweet



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CONTENTS

7	INTRODUCTION
10	BASICS
46	CHOCOLATE DESSERTS
66	CREAM DESSERTS
90	FRUIT DESSERTS
114	PASTRY DESSERTS
136	CHOCOLATE CAKES
148	CAKES WITH FRUIT
166	TEATIME
186	TROUBLESHOOTING
188	EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIERS
189	INDEX
192	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



INTRODUCTION

In my time, I've been privileged to work in some of the best kitchens in the world, alongside some of the greatest chefs. Don't ask me how, as I'd say it's mostly been down to luck - being in the right place at the right time. But I guess somewhere along the way you have to make your own luck, and of course you still have to produce the goods, as you do in any job.

For me, though, it's not just a job. It's a life, and one that I will always love. Ever since I watched my grandparents making pastry in front of the old telly, rubbing butter into flour by hand, I've wanted to cook; this, I suppose, was when the seed was first planted.

Nowadays, of course, the pastry bench is the place to be, with bake-offs all over the place. But it was a very different scene back in the early 1990s, when a young lad from Yorkshire entered the kitchens of some of the most well-known and well-respected chefs in the country. To say I was bricking it would be an understatement! Aged just 17, I quickly realised that there was going to be no shortcut to the top.

Pastry wasn't really what I had in mind at the time, but fate intervened: the pastry chef went to the loo, never to be seen again. And so after only three days I was on the pastry section, becoming head of it within four months. Back then, no-one wanted to work on the pastry section. To some, it wasn't seen as manly enough, for there was no heat and sweat and fire, but I reckon the real reason was the hours. As a pastry chef, you work longer shifts than anyone in the kitchen: there are early starts for the breakfast stuff, and you can't go home until the last table has ordered dessert. Not that it bothered me. In fact, it made me like it even more. I was on £90 a week, clocking up 115 hours most weeks, and I didn't know any different. What I did soon discover, though, was that when you're working with the best, you absorb everything like a sponge, and so all those hours paid off.

But it's only when you sit down to write a book that you get chance to share all the recipes, tips and advice you've picked up along the way. It's now almost ten years since my first desserts cookbook came out, and I'm really proud that it's still in print and still going strong. I'm especially thrilled when I hear of young chefs using it as a guide to baking and pastry.

With my next desserts book – the one you’re holding in your hands – I wanted to take things further, to show how my cooking has evolved and how much I have learnt, and am still learning, from the great chefs I’m lucky enough to meet. The rum baba is a case in point. There are good ones, and there are great ones, but for me the very best rum baba in the UK is Pierre Koffmann’s. The recipe I’ve included in this book is as close as I’ve got so far, and I reckon it’s pretty close. It might even be close enough to save you the train fare to London to eat at his amazing restaurant, The Berkeley. Although, of course, it’s still worth making that journey for so many other reasons..

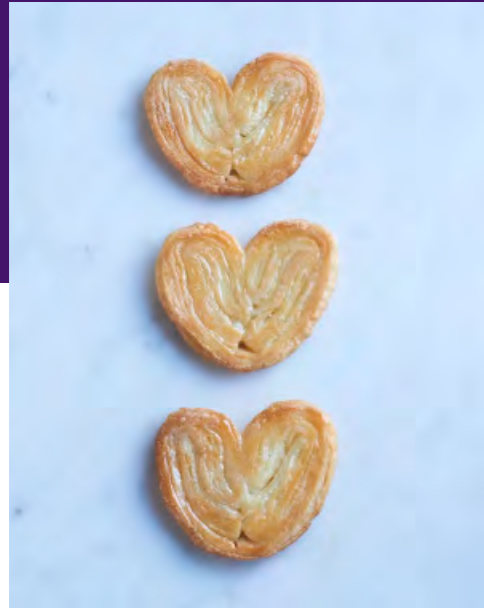
I remember Pierre Koffmann telling me why chefs need to concentrate on the pastry section: not only is it the biggest section in the kitchen, but also it’s their dessert, or even just a petit four, which is the last food you taste before you leave the restaurant, so it needs to create a lasting impression.

Whilst I hope most things in here look impressive (and to be honest, it’s easier to make a cake look pretty than a duck leg), the taste must always come first. So what you’ll find in this book are the ‘best of the best’ recipes I’ve found, made up and borrowed, together with some basic recipes at the front and some handy troubleshooting tips at the back. Of course it’s not possible to show you everything to do with baking and pastry in one book, but it will point you in the right direction. The rest is up to you!

This is a book I’m extremely proud of, and I’ve done all I can to make it work on every level – I even insisted on plating every single dish for the photography, which was all done at my house. I hope you enjoy it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', is positioned at the bottom of the text column.

PROPER PUFF PASTRY



There are two types of puff pastry: rough puff and classic puff pastry. The difference lies in the way the butter is incorporated. In this classic recipe, a portion of the butter is added to the flour, salt and water to create a dough, which is then 'laminated' with a large block of butter. The idea is to create layers between the butter and the dough. When the butter melts in the oven it produces steam, which is trapped between the layers of pastry, creating the 'puff'. It's very important to keep all the ingredients cold, even the flour. And always use butter, never margarine. You can store puff pastry in the fridge for 3-4 days, and it freezes very well.

Makes 550g
250g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
pinch of fine salt
300g cold unsalted butter (50g cut into cubes, the rest left in a block)
150ml cold water

- 1 Put the flour and salt on a marble worktop or in a bowl. Add the cubes of butter and rub together with your fingertips to form crumbs. Stir in the cold water and mix to form a soft dough. If using a bowl, tip out onto an unfloured work surface. Pat out into a 2cm-thick rectangle.
- 2 Put the block of butter between two pieces of silicone paper and bash out with a rolling pin to a 15cm x 10cm rectangle.
- 3 Dust the worktop with a little flour and roll out the dough to form a rectangle measuring 30cm x 20cm, with the long side facing you.
- 4 Remove the butter from the paper and place in the centre of the dough. Fold the short side of the dough over the butter, from left to right, then fold the other side over to meet it, covering the butter and brushing off any excess flour. Pinch together the dough at the top and bottom open ends to seal the butter inside, then fold the dough in half lengthways.
- 5 Turn the dough 90 degrees, then roll out again to a 30cm x 20cm rectangle, again with the long side facing you. Fold one-quarter of the dough across to the centre, from left to right, then fold the other side over to meet it. Fold it in half lengthways, then repeat the whole process one more time, from the point where you turn the dough 90 degrees. Cover and place in the fridge to chill for 1 hour before using. At this stage the dough can also be frozen and used when required. It will keep for 4 weeks in the freezer.



LINING A TART TIN PROPERLY

Over the thirty-odd years I've been a pastry chef, I've learned a thing or two, including how to line a tart tin properly. The most important thing is to understand how the end product should look. The pastry base should be thin, unshrunk and uncracked. Shrinking and cracking are caused by overworking. If the pastry is bulging, this could be because of a lack of weight during blind-baking. This often happens when baking beans are used. Flour or rice are my preference, but watch you don't undercook the pastry. Really, it's a matter of keeping in mind an image of the finished product and doing everything in sequence to achieve it. Good luck!



soft butter, for greasing
flour, for dusting
pastry, for lining tin
1 egg yolk, beaten, for sealing pastry

- 1 First, butter the tart tin well using soft butter. I find melted butter tends to sink into the pastry base and can make it soggy.
- 2 On a lightly floured work surface, roll the chilled, rested pastry to a thickness of about 2mm, turning the pastry 90 degrees every roll. This means you will use less flour to roll it out, which, in turn, means the pastry won't toughen up. Set a small amount of pastry aside for patching up holes later.
- 3 Carefully roll the pastry onto a rolling pin, then lift it over the tart tin and unroll it, draping the pastry loosely over the case. Don't allow the rolling pin to touch the tin as this will cut the pastry.
- 4 Gently press the pastry into the base of the tin first, making sure it is reaching all the corners. Draw the rest up and over the sides and press lightly. Be very gentle with the pastry as it can tear if you stretch it. Drape the excess pastry over the sides of the tin so that it hangs down the outside by at least 2–3cm. If there are holes, fill them with the spare pastry.
- 5 Line the whole tin with a double layer of clingfilm (make sure you use proper clingfilm, not food wrap) then fill with flour, uncooked rice, or dried beans. Gather the clingfilm loosely over the top of the filling then place in the fridge to chill for at least 1 hour. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6.
- 6 Put the tart on a baking tray and place in the oven for 15 minutes, then remove from the oven and carefully lift out the clingfilm and filling. Brush the inside of the tart with beaten egg yolk – this will seal any small holes that may have appeared in the tart case.
- 7 Return to the oven for another 10 minutes, until the pastry is just lightly golden and cooked through. You can reuse the baked flour, rice or beans for blind baking.
- 8 For a clean finish, use a sharp knife to trim the pastry edges off once the tart case is fully cooked – you can do this with or without the filling.





CHOCOLATE DESSERTS





Using vegetables in cakes is nothing new, of course, but I really like this combination. Beetroot has a great flavour and a sweetness that softens the bitterness of the chocolate. I've put it just in the filling and the glaze, as I find that adding it to the cake unbalances the recipe.

CHOCOLATE BEETROOT ROULADE WITH CHOCOLATE CREAM

Serves 8–10

200g dark chocolate (53% cocoa solids), roughly chopped

200g butter

300g packet cooked beetroot, juices reserved, roughly chopped

100g icing sugar

150g cream cheese

5 eggs

175g light brown soft sugar

75g self-raising flour

10 cherries, stalks left on

For the chocolate cream

300ml double cream

200g dark chocolate (53% cocoa solids)

Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas mark 5 and line a 23cm x 33cm Swiss roll tin with a sheet of silicone paper.

Put the chocolate and butter in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering (not boiling) water. The bowl should not touch the water. Heat to melt, stirring occasionally, until the chocolate and butter are smooth. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Place the chopped beetroot and juices in a food blender and blitz to a fine purée. Pour all but 125ml of the puréed beetroot into the warm chocolate.

In a separate bowl, beat the icing sugar and cream cheese together until smooth, then beat in 75ml of the puréed beetroot. Set aside with the 50ml puréed beetroot in the fridge while you make the cake.

Whisk the eggs and sugar in a kitchen mixer, or in a large bowl with electric beaters, until very thick and pale in colour. Carefully pour in the cooled chocolate-and-beetroot mixture and whisk until just combined. Sift the flour into the mixture then gently fold in, making sure it has all been incorporated.

Pour into the prepared tin and bake for 10–15 minutes until risen. The sponge should spring back when pressed lightly. Lift the sponge out of the tin and leave to cool slightly.

Meanwhile, heat the cream in a saucepan until just simmering, then remove from the heat and add the chocolate, stirring all the time until the mixture is smooth. Pour into a large bowl to cool. When the mixture is at room temperature, whisk until it just holds its shape.

Spread the chocolate cream over the cooled sponge, leaving a 2cm border around the edge. Score a line 1cm in from one of the longest edges and bend this border over gently. Spoon all but 2 tbsp of the beetroot cream in a line 2cm wide inside the border. Using the silicone paper underneath, roll up the sponge quite tightly, making sure the filling stays inside. Pull the paper towards you as you roll the sponge away from you.

Roll the sponge onto a serving plate – the bottom will be uppermost, giving a smooth finish. Pipe or drizzle over the remaining beetroot cream and puréed beetroot. Finish with a line of cherries down the centre.

This is one of my favourite desserts in the book. It has to be made well, though, starting with the puff pastry. Homemade puff pastry is far better than shop-bought, and as such it really makes this dessert. To get the right finish, bake the pastry between two baking sheets to keep it thin before glazing it with icing sugar. I'm lucky enough to have wild strawberries at the bottom of the garden, but most soft fruit will work with white chocolate.

WHITE CHOCOLATE POT WITH PUFF PASTRY FINGER, WILD STRAWBERRIES AND A WHITE BALSAMIC GLAZE

Serves 6

For the chocolate pots

150g white chocolate, roughly chopped

4 egg yolks

75g caster sugar

100ml double cream

For the puff pastry shards

100g puff pastry (see page 12)

flour, for dusting

1 tbsp icing sugar

For the white balsamic glaze

50ml white balsamic vinegar

2 tsp caster sugar

10g ultratex (see page 188)

To serve

100g wild strawberries and pine berries
(or small strawberries)

1 small handful of baby mint sprigs

Start by making the chocolate pots. Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering (not boiling) water. The bowl should not touch the water.

While the chocolate melts, whisk the egg yolks and sugar together in a food mixer, or in a bowl using an electric whisk, until very thick and pale. Pour the melted chocolate onto the eggs and whisk until incorporated. In a separate bowl, whip the cream to soft peaks, then fold into the chocolate mixture. Pour into 6 small serving pots or ramekins, then place in the fridge until set, at least 2 hours.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured work surface to a thickness of about 3mm. Transfer to a baking sheet lined with silicone paper, then place another sheet of silicone paper over the top, followed by another baking sheet the same size. You want the pastry not to rise, so the sheets need to sit snugly, one on top of the other.

Bake in the oven for 12–15 minutes until cooked through and golden brown. Remove and leave to cool between the baking sheets for 5 minutes, then move to a wire rack to cool completely.

Cut the cooked pastry into 6 rectangles measuring 15cm x 2.5cm then dust with the icing sugar. Glaze with a blow torch or under the grill until golden brown.

Heat the white balsamic vinegar and caster sugar in a small saucepan until the sugar has melted, then take off of the heat and whisk in the ultratex. This will thicken the liquid to a gel-like texture. Allow to cool a little before spooning into a small piping bag, then snip off the tip about 3mm from the end.

Place the chocolate pots onto serving plates, then lay one puff pastry shard over the top of each pot. Decorate the pastry with the berries, small sprigs of mint and dots of the white balsamic glaze.



Once you master this simple meringue roulade, you'll find yourself making it instead of a standard Swiss roll. I've filled it with coffee cream and candied walnuts, but you could also use the candied chestnuts called *marrons glacés* that are often knocking around at Christmas time. With its playful garnish of tuile leaves, this makes a great dinner-party dessert.

COFFEE AND CANDIED WALNUT MERINGUE ROULADE

Serves 10

5 egg whites
275g caster sugar, plus extra for dusting
400ml double cream
10ml Camp coffee essence
1 vanilla pod, split and deseeded

For the tuiles

115g butter, softened
140g icing sugar
3 egg whites
115g plain flour
brown and purple food colouring
gold food spray

For the candied walnuts

150g caster sugar
150ml water
200g walnut halves
vegetable oil, for frying

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Grease a 23cm x 33cm Swiss roll tin and line with silicone paper.

Make sure your bowl and whisk are very clean, free of grease and completely dry, as any grease or water will affect the meringue. Place the egg whites in the bowl and whisk with a food mixer or an electric whisk on high speed until soft peaks form. Add the sugar, a spoonful at a time, whisking until the mixture is smooth and glossy. Spoon into the prepared tin and smooth the surface. Bake for 8 minutes or until golden brown, then lower the oven temperature to 170°C/325°F/Gas mark 3 and bake for 15 minutes or until crisp.

Remove from the oven and turn out of the tin onto a sheet of silicone paper dusted with caster sugar. Remove the paper from the base of the meringue and allow to cool.

For the tuiles, turn the oven up to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6. Beat the butter and icing sugar together in a bowl until smooth then whisk in the egg whites, one at a time, until smooth and shiny. Sieve the flour over and fold in gently, then tip half of the batch into a separate bowl. Use the food colouring to colour one batch brown and one purple, then chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.

Place a leaf stencil on a non-stick mat or silicone paper. Using a palette knife, spread the tuile mixture thinly over. Repeat across the mat or paper. Bake for 4–5 minutes, then immediately lay the leaves over the handle of a wooden spoon to curl them. When cold and hardened, spray with edible gold spray.

To make the walnuts, put the sugar and water into a pan and bring to the boil, stirring gently once. Simmer until the sugar has dissolved and the syrup thickened slightly. Add the walnuts and cook for 2–3 minutes. Empty the pan contents onto a sheet of silicone paper.

Pour enough vegetable oil into a sauté pan to cover the bottom by 2cm and heat until just shimmering. Carefully place the walnuts, a few at a time, into the hot oil for a couple of minutes until golden. Drain again on a fresh sheet of silicone paper and leave to cool.

For the filling, whisk the cream, coffee essence and vanilla seeds in a bowl to soft peaks. Spread it over the cooled meringue, then scatter three-quarters of the walnuts over the cream. Starting at the long end, roll up the meringue using the paper to help you.

Decorate the top of the roulade with the tuile leaves and remaining candied walnuts.



This is like a French charlotte, really, and is similar to the ones I used to make over there. It's worth having a go at making your own sponge fingers – they're not difficult, and they taste far better than the shop-bought sort. Try not to overwork the bavarois mixture or it might split. It's also a good idea to partially set the bavarois before spooning it into the mould, as it can leak out between the sponge fingers if it's too runny.

RASPBERRY BAVAROIS CHARLOTTE

Serves 6–8

For the sponge fingers

butter, for greasing

4 eggs, separated

70g caster sugar, plus 50g for dusting

35g plain flour

35g cornflour

For the bavarois

150ml milk

½ tsp vanilla bean extract

100g caster sugar

3 egg yolks

6 sheets gelatine, soaked in cold water for 5 minutes

400g raspberries

30g icing sugar

300ml double cream

To garnish

300g raspberries

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4. Line a baking sheet with silicone paper and grease and line the base and sides of a 17cm deep-sided springform tin.

First make the sponge fingers. Whisk the egg yolks and 35g of the sugar together in a food mixer, or in a bowl with an electric whisk, until light and fluffy. Sift the flour and cornflour onto the mixture and fold in. In another bowl that is clean, free of grease and completely dry, whisk the egg whites until soft peaks form, then whisk in the remaining 35g caster sugar until shiny and the sugar has dissolved. Fold the meringue into the egg-yolk mixture, taking care not to knock out all the air. Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a 7mm plain nozzle and pipe fingers about 8cm long onto the baking sheet (see also page 38). Dust with the extra sugar then bake for 20 minutes until light golden brown and firm to the touch. Remove from the oven and cool on the tray.

While they cool, make the bavarois. Heat the milk and vanilla bean extract in a saucepan until just simmering. Meanwhile, place the caster sugar and egg yolks in a bowl and whisk together, then pour the warm milk over the egg-yolk mixture, whisking all the time. Return the custard mixture to the saucepan and cook

until it thickens just enough to coat the back of a spoon – make sure that it doesn't boil. Add the drained, squeezed gelatine to the custard. Stir through until dissolved then set aside to cool in the fridge.

Place the raspberries and icing sugar in a blender and blitz to a purée. Pass through a fine sieve into a bowl. Whip the double cream to soft peaks. When the custard is cool, whisk the purée into it, then fold in the whipped cream. Place in the fridge, whisking every 30 minutes, until it becomes the texture of softly whipped cream and is nearly set.

If the sponge fingers are taller than the prepared tin, trim them to the same height, and trim any uneven edges so that the biscuits sit next to each other snugly. Use them to line the tin by standing them upright, facing outwards and with the trimmed end down. Spoon the bavarois into the centre and chill in the fridge to set for at least 4 hours.

Carefully remove from the tin and transfer to a serving plate. To do this cleanly, warm the ring quickly with a blow torch, or dip a cloth into hot water and run it around the ring. Peel off the paper. Fill the top of the charlotte with tightly packed rings of raspberries.



A classic dessert first invented in 1910, in honour of the Paris-Brest-Paris cycle race, this has since become popular all over the world. Sadly, we don't often see it in restaurants nowadays, but it's widely available in patisseries across France and in the UK. With a praline mousseline filling and choux pastry, its simple, precise flavours make it a winner every single time. I've topped mine with a little bit of caramel and flaked almonds to add some texture, but you could just leave it plain.

PARIS BREST

Serves 6-8

1 quantity choux pastry (see page 20)

2 tbsp flaked almonds

For the mousseline filling

600g warm crème pâtissière
(see page 28)

400g butter, softened

150ml double cream

225g hazelnut paste

For the topping

200g caster sugar

50g toasted flaked almonds

Make the choux pastry following the method on page 20.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6 and line a baking sheet with silicone paper. Draw a 30cm circle onto the paper then flip the paper over and place on the tray.

Spoon the choux pastry into a piping bag fitted with a 1cm plain nozzle and pipe, using swirls or lines, into one large ring, using the line as a template. If you like, you can draw an inner circle as a guide. Scatter the flaked almonds over the top of the choux.

Place a heatproof container of water into the oven on the base or bottom shelf to create steam. Bake the choux ring for 20 minutes. Open the oven door, remove the water container then shut the door, drop the oven temperature to 180°C/350°F/Gas mark 4 and continue to bake for another 20 minutes until golden brown and crisp. The water helps with the steam to start with, but you need to remove it to get a nice crusty result. Remove the choux ring from the tray and cool on a wire rack.

To make the mousseline filling, prepare the crème pâtissière. Beat half the butter into the warm crème pâtissière then allow to cool to room temperature. Beat in the rest of the butter, the cream and the hazelnut paste – you will end up with a smooth, light filling. Spoon it into a piping bag fitted with a plain 1cm nozzle.

Split the choux ring in half horizontally using a sharp, serrated knife and turning the ring as you cut. Place the base on a serving plate. Pipe the mousseline filling over the base then top with other half of the ring.

Heat a frying pan until hot, then add the sugar and cook until the sugar becomes liquid and turns a deep golden caramel colour. Add the toasted flaked almonds and stir through, then drizzle straight over the top of the filled choux. Allow to cool for a few minutes so that it hardens slightly before serving.

