



THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

A FOOD BLOG

Croissants (from Martha Stewart's *Baking Handbook*)

Makes 2 dozen

If using dry yeast instead of fresh, heat the milk to about 100°F, then stir in the yeast to dissolve. Let stand until foamy, about five minutes, and proceed with the recipe. The dough can be made ahead through all of the turns and frozen for up to three months; before using, defrost the dough in the refrigerator for twenty-four hours. After baking, croissants are best eaten within six hours.

2 cups cold milk
2 tablespoons honey
1½ pounds (about 4 ½ cups) bread flour, plus more for dusting
4 ounces (1 scant cup) unbleached pastry flour
½ cup sugar
1½ ounces fresh yeast, crumbled
1 tablespoon plus 1½ teaspoons salt
1¼ pounds (5 sticks) unsalted butter, cold
1 large egg, lightly beaten

1. Make the dough package: Pour the milk and honey into a 1-quart liquid measuring cup, and stir to combine; set aside. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the dough hook, stir together 1 pound 6 ounces (about 4¼ cups) bread flour, the pastry flour, sugar, yeast, and salt; stir to combine. Add milk mixture, and mix on low speed until the dough just comes together, 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured work surface; gently knead to form a smooth ball, about 45 seconds. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate at least 1 hour or overnight.
3. Make the butter package: Lay the butter sticks side by side on a piece of plastic wrap, and sprinkle with the remaining 2 ounces (about ¼ cup) flour. Pound with a rolling pin until flour is incorporated, and roll into an 8-inch square. Wrap tightly and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or overnight.
4. Remove dough package from the refrigerator; place on a lightly floured work surface. Roll out to a 16-by-10-inch rectangle, about ½ inch thick, with a short side facing you. Remove butter package from the refrigerator; place on the bottom half of the dough; fold the top half of the dough over the butter, and pinch the edges to seal.
5. Roll out the dough to a 20-by-10 rectangle about ½ inch thick, with a short side facing you; keep the corners as square as possible. Remove any excess flour with a dry pastry brush. Starting at the far end, fold the rectangle in thirds, as you would a business letter. This completes the first of three turns. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 1 hour.
6. Repeat rolling and folding as above two more times, starting with the flap opening on the right, as if it were a book, and refrigerate at least 1 hour between turns. To help you remember how many turns have been completed, mark the dough after each: Make one mark for the first turn, two for the second, and three for the third. After the third, wrap dough in plastic, and refrigerate 6 to 8 hours, or overnight.
7. Turn out chilled dough onto a lightly floured work surface. Roll out the dough to a 30-by-16-inch rectangle. (If the dough becomes too elastic, cover with plastic wrap, and let rest in the refrigerator for 10 minutes.) Using a

pizza wheel or pastry cutter, cut the dough in half lengthwise to form two 30-by-8-inch rectangles. Stack one piece of dough on top of the other, lining up the edges. Using the pizza wheel, cut dough into triangles, each with a 4-inch base (you will have scraps of dough at both ends). Cut a 1-inch slit in the center of the base of each triangle. Place triangles in a single layer on a clean work surface.

8. To shape croissants, stretch the two lower points of each triangle to enlarge the slit slightly. Fold the inner corners formed by the slit toward the outer sides of the triangles, and press down to seal. Using your fingertips, roll the base of each triangle up and away from you, stretching the dough slightly outward as you roll; the tip should be tucked under the croissant. Pull the two ends toward you to form a crescent. Transfer the crescents to two parchment-lined baking sheets, 2 inches apart (12 on each sheet). Cover loosely with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm place until very spongy and doubled in bulk, 45 to 60 minutes.

9. Preheat the oven to 400°F, with the racks in the upper and lower thirds. Lightly brush crescents with the beaten egg. Bake, rotating sheets halfway through, until the croissants are puffed and golden brown, about 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer sheets to a wire rack to cool. Serve warm or at room temperature.