

## MASTER CLASS

Fermented and layered with loads of butter, Tartine's signature croissant dough is the building block for so many more flaky twists, buns, and danish

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA HOLMES • PROP STYLING BY EMMA STAR JENSEN



**B**aker Chad Robertson does two things to croissants better than anyone in America. First, he effortlessly deploys the French *cwa-ssahn* pronunciation without sounding pretentious. But more important, he serves 200 perfectly crisp but chewy croissants a day fresh, within an hour of leaving the oven, to the bakery's ravenous fans. They've been snaking around the block of his original San Francisco bakery for two decades and his new location, Tartine Manufactory,

*The croissant's perfection is twofold: an interior of infinitely spiraling paper-thin layers and a shatteringly flaky crust (see pg. 28 for recipe).*

for a little over a year.

“Croissants are an impressive feat of engineering,” Chad explains, while tending to loaves of sour-dough in the massive oven that sits front and center of Tartine Manufactory. “For ours, we strive for a moist center and caramelized crust. When you bite into one, it should have some weight but also just shatter.”

Tartine’s weapon for nailing these contrasts is its master dough, which Chad and his team are constantly perfecting. They found that laminating with high-quality, high-fat butter helped prevent the pastries from cracking in the oven, while adding richness. “People think the flavor just comes from butter, but a lot of the flavor in croissants comes from fermentation,” Chad says of the process by which yeast converts sugar to carbon dioxide and flavorful acids. The Tartine team relies on a preliminary fermentation called a *pool-ish* that uses packaged yeast; along with quickly developing flavor, the technique makes the dough easier to roll. “By fermenting this kind of dough, you can do almost anything,” explains Fausto Echeverria, who leads the team responsible for all *viennoiseries*, pastries made using yeasted doughs. “This fermented dough is much easier to form into shapes,” Fausto says. “It also tastes neutral, so you can add sweet or savory ingredients.” The same dough they use for croissants is molded into eggy breakfast buns and their beloved orange and cinnamon-scented morning buns.

That’s to say by rolling out, beating, and laminating your own pastry dough at home, you aren’t just rewarded with a fun project that brings folks together in the kitchen and decadent croissants that have seemingly endless layers.

You’re also creating a buttery blank canvas for other baked goods. Use it for display-ready pinwheel danish topped with seasonal fruit, extra-flaky pigs in a blanket, or one of the following recipes, developed for us by the pros at Tartine. ■



## Tartine’s Croissants

MAKES 14 CROISSANTS; Photo pg. 27

Active: 2 hr. • Total: 14 hr.

The croissant is the most celebrated member of the family of butter- and sugar-enriched, yeasted pastries known as *viennoiseries*. They obtain their signature flaky texture through lamination, the process of coating a dough with fat and repeatedly folding and rolling it to create layers. Tartine owner Chad Robertson insists on an unsalted, high-fat butter with at least 80 percent fat for laminating his straight-armed versions.

Recipe times may vary drastically depending on environmental factors, so be sure to mind

the visual cues before moving on to the next step. If possible, use a scale to measure your ingredients and work in a cool room.

### FOR THE PREFERMENT:

- ¾ cup (200 g) 2% milk
- ½ tsp. (2 g) active dry yeast (not instant)
- 1¼ cups (175 g) bread flour

### FOR THE DOUGH:

- 2 tsp. (8 g) active dry yeast (not instant)
- 1¾ cups (425 g) 2% milk
- 5¼ cups (800 g) bread flour, plus more as needed
- ⅓ cup (70 g) sugar
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. (22 g) fine sea salt
- 1 Tbsp. (12 g) unsalted butter, melted

- 5 sticks (585 g) high-fat unsalted butter (look for European-style brands like Plugra, Président, or Kerrygold) at room temperature
- 3 large egg yolks
- 2 Tbsp. heavy cream

**1** Make the preferment: In a small saucepan over low heat, warm the milk just enough to take the chill off. (The milk should not feel warm or cold to the touch, 80°–90°.)

**2** Pour the milk into a large bowl, then sprinkle in the yeast and stir to dissolve. Add the flour and mix with a wooden spoon until a smooth batter forms. Cover the bowl with a clean, dry kitchen towel and let the mixture rise until almost doubled in volume, 2½–3 hours at room temperature or overnight in the refrigerator.

**3** Make the dough: Transfer the preferment to the large bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Set the milk, flour, sugar, salt, and melted butter nearby. Add the yeast to the preferment and mix on low speed, stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl and bring together the ingredients as needed, until the yeast is incorporated and the mixture is an even, well-mixed mass, about 2 minutes. Raise the speed to medium, and while mixing, slowly add half of the milk. Continue to mix until fully incorporated. Turn off the mixer, then add the flour, sugar, salt, melted butter, and the remaining half of the milk. Mix on low speed until a loose dough forms, about 2 minutes. Return the speed to medium and mix until the dough is smooth and cohesive, 2 minutes more. Remove the hook and cover the bowl with a clean, dry kitchen towel. Let rise in a cool place until the volume has increased by nearly half, about 1½ hours.

**4** Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work surface and form it into a rough rectangle about 2 inches thick. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate until chilled through, 3–4 hours.

**5** One hour before laminating the dough, make your butter sheet. Place a large sheet of parchment paper or plastic wrap on a work surface. Add the butter to the center in a neat pile, then cover with a second sheet. Use a rolling pin to flatten and form the butter into a 12x18½-inch rectangle, peeling back the top sheet to manipulate the butter into shape as needed. Refrigerate to lightly chill but not fully resolidify, 5–10 minutes.

**6** Laminate the dough: Lightly flour a work surface. Retrieve and unwrap the dough, then roll it out to a 28x12-inch rectangle. With a long side facing you, peel the top sheet away from the butter and flip it over to cover the left two-thirds of the rectangle. Peel away the other sheet. Fold the uncovered third of the dough over the butter, then fold the left-hand third over the center, as if folding a business letter. With your fingers, push down along the seams on the top and the bottom to seal in the

butter. Give the dough a quarter turn so that the seams are perpendicular to you. Roll out the dough once more into a 28x12-inch rectangle, and fold again in the same manner (no need to pinch the seams again). Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour to relax the gluten in the dough.

**7** Clean the work surface, dust again lightly with flour, and retrieve the dough. Unwrap and again roll out into a rectangle 28x12 inches. Fold into thirds so that the rectangle measures 9x12 inches and 1½–2 inches thick. Wrap in plastic and immediately freeze on a flat surface for at least 1 hour or up to 1 week. (If frozen for more than an hour, transfer the

dough to the refrigerator to thaw overnight before using in the morning.)

**8** Three hours before you are ready to serve, form and proof the croissants: Remove the thawed dough from the refrigerator. Line 3 baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside. Lightly dust a work surface with flour and roll into a 12x40-inch rectangle about ¼ inch thick. Use a straight edge and a paring knife or pizza cutter to carefully trim 1 inch from each of the long sides; save for another use. Cut the remaining dough into 14 triangles, 4 inches at the base and 10 inches tall. Working one at a time, stretch the triangles slightly to extend them



1 2  
3 4



**TIME TO MAKE THE DOUGH** Lead viennoisier, Fausto Echeverria, uses a high-fat, European-style butter from Oregon to laminate Tartine's croissant dough. First, a thin sheet of butter is laid on top of the dough before it is folded into thirds (1). Then, Echeverria rolls the dough out a second time (2), before folding it again in thirds like a letter (3, 4). After a short rest in the fridge, the folding process is repeated once more. The dough is then rested again for several hours to relax the gluten. After the final rest, the dough can be sheeted out and shaped into croissants, danish, and morning buns.

to 11 inches. Then, starting at the base, roll each tightly all the way to the tip to form an even, straight-armed croissant shape. Press slightly at the tip to adhere and to make a slightly flattened base for the croissant to rest on. Continue rolling the croissants in this manner, then transfer them, spaced evenly apart and flattened side down on the prepared baking sheets (no more than 6 croissants per baking sheet).

**9** Preheat the oven to 400° and set the racks at least 4 inches apart. (If you only have room for 2 racks, the croissants should be baked in 2 rounds.) Set a large, wide baking dish filled with water on the floor of the

oven. Place the baking sheets in a warm, preferably humid spot and let rise until the croissants are puffed, very gassy, and about doubled in size (they should slowly spring back when poked with your fingertip and jiggle slightly like gelatin when the tray is shaken), 60–80 minutes.

**10** In a small bowl, beat the yolks and heavy cream. Brush the risen croissants evenly with the mixture and bake, without opening the oven, until the croissants begin to color, 20–22 minutes. Rotate the pans and continue cooking until evenly golden, 6–8 minutes more. Let cool slightly before serving.



## The French Connection

“Americans think there’s this thing called a ‘French croissant’ but the truth is there are thousands of varieties and characteristics throughout France. Some are denser, some are flakier, some are lighter or darker and crispy with a chewy texture inside. And when they’re great, they’re so decadent and satisfying you don’t even want another. I’m not an advocate for the Parisian binge-eating-croissant vacation.”

—TARTINE’S CHAD ROBERTSON



## Baked Egg Danish with Kimchi and Bacon

MAKES 12 DANISH

*Active: 2 hr. • Total: 14 hr. 30 min.*

Rich, chewy laminated dough puffs up in the oven to suspend kimchi, bacon, and baked eggs in the center of these savory breakfast pastries. Swap out the kimchi and bacon for any of your favorite savory egg accompaniments, like cooked mushrooms and greens or grated cheese and herbs. For the best texture, be sure to drain or squeeze any extra liquid off cooked vegetables before adding.

- 3** large egg yolks
- 2** Tbsp. heavy cream
- 1** batch Tartine’s Croissants dough (pg. 28), prepared through Step 7  
Bread flour, for dusting
- 4** thick slices cooked bacon, chopped
- ½** cup prepared kimchi, drained well
- 12** large eggs
- Chopped chives for topping

**1** Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper; set aside. In a small bowl, beat the 3 egg yolks and the heavy cream; set aside.

**2** Three hours before you are ready to serve, remove the thawed croissant dough from the refrigerator. Lightly dust a work surface with flour and use a rolling pin to flatten the dough into a 26x18-inch rectangle about ⅛ inch thick. Use a straight edge and a paring knife or pizza cutter to trim about 1 inch from all 4 sides so that you have an even, 24x16-inch rectangle. Cut the rectangle into twenty-four 4-inch squares. Transfer to the prepared baking sheets; refrigerate for 30 minutes.

**3** Place 2 oven racks at least 3 inches apart in the center of the oven, and preheat to 400°. Set a large baking dish filled with water on the floor of the oven. Retrieve the pastry squares, and if shrunken slightly, stretch and trim them back into even 4-inch squares. Use a 2-inch round biscuit cutter to punch holes in the center of half of the squares (these will be the top sides of the pastries). Brush the edges of the remaining dough squares lightly with egg wash (reserve the remaining egg wash for later). Layer the pieces with the cutouts onto the uncut pieces, then distribute them around the prepared baking sheets, leaving as much space between them as possible. Set the trays in a warm, preferably humid place and let the

### TARTINE TIP

GIVE YOURSELF LOTS OF TIME TO MAKE THESE AND DON’T RUSH THE FERMENTATION STEPS. IN ADDITION TO ADDING LOADS OF FLAVOR, THEY MAKE THE RAW DOUGH FLEXIBLE AND “EXTENSIBLE,” AS BAKERS SAY, MEANING THE DOUGH ROLLS OUT EASILY WITHOUT BUCKING BACK.





pastries rise until they are puffed and nearly doubled in size, 35–40 minutes.

**4** Brush the tops of the danish evenly with the remaining egg wash. Put a few pieces of chopped bacon into each hole, reserving half, and divide the kimchi into each. Transfer the trays to the oven and bake until the pastry is quite golden and puffed slightly in the center but still soft, 18–20 minutes. Remove the trays. Working quickly, use the back of a spoon to lightly press the center of the pastry back down, deepening the hole. Carefully crack 1 egg into each hole and top with the remaining bacon bits. Immediately return the trays to the oven and bake until the pastries are deep golden brown, the egg whites have set, and the yolks are still tender and soft (about 9 minutes for a very runny yolk and 13–15 for well done). Remove, sprinkle each yolk lightly with chives, and serve immediately.



## Piquillo Pepper and Almond Morning Buns

MAKES 18–20 BUNS

Active: 2 hr. • Total: 15 hr. 50 min.

Tartine's sweet morning bun has been the darling of San Francisco pastry lovers for years. Lead *viennoisier* Fausto Echeverria's savory version trades the bun's sugary cinnamon-orange streusel filling for a piquillo pepper and almond mixture inspired by Catalan romesco sauce. The kitchen team at Tartine roasts and preserves their own fresh piquillo peppers, but a good-quality jarred version is a fine substitute. After baking, sprinkle the warm buns with finely shredded Manchego.

- 8** oz. canned roasted piquillo peppers, drained and coarsely chopped (about 2 cups)
- ¼** cup roasted almonds, coarsely chopped
- Leaves from **1** bunch Italian parsley
- 2** garlic cloves, chopped
- ½** tsp. kosher salt
- ½** tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2** Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for brushing and garnishing
- 1** large egg yolk
- 2** tsp. heavy cream
- 1** batch Tartine's Croissants dough (pg. 28), prepared through Step 7
- Bread flour**, for dusting
- 1** cup shredded Manchego cheese

**1** In a small bowl, reserve 2 tablespoons of the peppers, 1 tablespoon of almonds, a large pinch of parsley, and a small pinch of garlic for garnish. Season with a pinch each of the salt and pepper and set aside.

**2** In a food processor, add the remaining

# How to Bake like Tartine at Home

A 15-year employee of Tartine, Fausto Echeverria started as a dishwasher and worked his way through all of the stations in the kitchen before heading up croissant production at Tartine Manufactory. His team turns out over 200 of their signature croissants a day with the help of futuristic Swedish ovens, a mega-size spiral mixer, and a dough sheeter. When baking with his young kids at home, Echeverria makes pastries that are almost as perfect by following these steps.

**Check Your Proofs** Professional bakers often let pastries made with yeast-leavened dough rise in warm, humidified cabinets known as proof boxes. If your kitchen is cool and dry, fake your own by setting your tray of shaped pastries in a large cooler or covered plastic bin beside a dish of hot water. This will prevent the surfaces from drying out and cracking and allow the tender dough to stretch evenly as it rises. Don't overproof; if the pastries have fully inflated and started to fall again, they will bake up flat and misshapen.

**Optimize Your Oven** Tartine bakes in a rotating convection oven that eliminates the need to open the oven to rotate during cooking. Echeverria re-creates the convection effect at home by adding a low, wide dish of water on the floor of the oven during preheating. The rising steam encourages heat and air movement and ensures a more even bake. The other key to consistency: Leave the door shut until the pastries have a good amount of color. Otherwise, they tend to fall before their shape is set.

**Keep Things Fresh** By Tartine's standards, croissants have an extremely short window of acceptable freshness. At home, Fausto proofs and bakes only what he intends to serve that day. Unproofed, raw pastries can be frozen and packed in resealable plastic bags. The night before you plan to bake, transfer the frozen pastries to a parchment paper-lined sheet tray, tent loosely with plastic wrap, and thaw in the refrigerator.

piquillo peppers, almonds, parsley, garlic, salt, black pepper, and 2 tablespoons oil; process until a homogenous paste forms. Set aside while you sheet out the dough.

**3** In a small bowl, beat the egg yolk and heavy cream and set aside. Three hours before you are ready to serve, remove the thawed dough from the refrigerator. Lightly flour a large work surface and place the dough on top; roll it into a 13x34-inch rectangle about ¼ inch thick. Use a straight edge and a paring knife or pizza cutter to trim about 1 inch from all 4 sides so that you have an even, 11-inch-wide piece of dough. With one of the long sides facing you, lightly brush a 1-inch strip along the side farthest from you with the egg wash. Then use an offset spatula to spread the pepper filling evenly over the rest of the dough. Roll the dough up away from you like a jelly roll, pressing gently on the seam to seal. Cut the log in half, wrap in plastic, and transfer to the freezer to chill before slicing, 15–20 minutes.

**4** Generously grease the tops and sides of 2 standard 12-cup muffin tins with olive oil or nonstick baking spray. Place 2 oven racks at least 5 inches apart in the center of the oven, and preheat to 325°. Set a large baking dish filled with water on the floor of the oven. Remove the dough from the freezer and slice into eighteen to twenty 1¼-inch disks. Set the slices into the prepared muffin tins, then place the tins in a warm, preferably humid spot. Let rise until puffed, very gassy, and risen about ¾ inch above the rim of the pan, 40–60 minutes.

**5** Once risen, brush the tops of the buns lightly with the egg wash. Bake until evenly golden and firm in the center, 1¼–2 hours.

**6** While hot, immediately invert the pans to unmold the buns (they will have baked together; keep them connected if possible). Top generously with shredded Manchego, the piquillo garnish, and a drizzle of olive oil, and serve immediately.



## Sour Cherry and Pistachio Danish

MAKES 30

Active: 2 hr. • Total: 13 hr. 50 min.

Layers of buttery, flaky laminated pastry are swirled around a lightly spiced, pleasantly gooey cherry compote, then brushed with orange liqueur and sprinkled with pulverized pistachios after baking. For an alcohol-free alternative, swap out the liqueur for a mixture of honey and fresh orange juice.

- 1¾ cups (225 g) dried sour cherries
- 1½ cups (350 ml) orange liqueur such as Cointreau or Grand Marnier
- 5 star anise
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 dried chile de árbol, stemmed
- Juice and finely grated zest of 1½ oranges (about ½ cup juice)
- Kosher salt
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. heavy cream
- 1 batch Tartine's Croissants dough (pg. 28), prepared through Step 7

**Bread flour, for dusting**  
¼ cup lightly toasted pistachios, cooled and crushed to a coarse powder in a food processor

**1** Make the cherry compote: In a small pot, combine the cherries, orange liqueur, star anise, cinnamon, chile, orange juice and zest, and a pinch of salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then immediately remove. Set aside to cool completely.

**2** Drain the cherries, reserving soaking liquid. Discard the star anise and cinnamon, and transfer the cherries and chile to a food processor. Pulse to make a coarse paste, then transfer to a small bowl and set aside.

### TARTINE TIP

KEEP MOISTURE CONTENT OF FILLINGS AND TOPPINGS TO A MINIMUM. FOR EXAMPLE, SQUEEZE ANY MOISTURE OUT OF COOKED VEGETABLES AND COOK FRESH FRUIT DOWN TO A JAMMY CONSISTENCY. TOO MUCH LIQUID CAN CAUSE UNEVEN PROOFING AND BAKING. MAKE YOUR FILLINGS AHEAD OF TIME SO THEY'RE READY TO USE WHEN THE DOUGH IS PREPARED.



**Get Scappy** Don't let an inch of dough go to waste. Instead of smushing the scraps together to form wonky croissants, turn them into these cheesy twists. Cut the trimmings from croissant dough into rectangles, spread one side with crème fraîche, and slit down the middle. Flip one short end of each rectangle through the opening twice. Proof just like the other danish, sprinkle generously with Gruyère, then bake at 400° to a crispy, golden brown.

**3** In a separate small bowl, beat the egg yolks and heavy cream; set aside. Three hours before you are ready to serve, remove the thawed dough from the refrigerator. Place the dough on a lightly floured work surface and use a rolling pin to flatten it to a 13x34-inch rectangle about ¼ inch thick. Use a straight edge and a paring knife or pizza cutter to trim about ½ inch from all 4 sides so that you have an even, 12x33-inch piece of dough. With one of the long sides facing you, lightly brush a 1-inch strip along the long side farthest from you with the egg wash. Then use an offset spatula or the back of a spoon to spread the compote evenly over the rest of the dough. Roll the dough up away from you like a jelly roll to make a log about 4 inches in diameter. Press gently on the seam to seal. Cut the log in half, wrap in plastic, and transfer to the freezer to chill before slicing, 15–20 minutes. (Or, you can freeze one or both logs for up to a week. Thaw in the refrigerator before using.)

**4** Line 4 baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside. Place 2 racks at least 3 inches apart in the center of the oven, then preheat to 400°. Set a large, wide baking dish filled with water on the floor of the oven. Remove the rolls of dough from the freezer and slice into twenty-eight to thirty 1¼-inch-thick disks. Space the disks evenly apart on the prepared baking sheets, then place in a warm, preferably humid spot. Let rise until they are puffed, very gassy, and the layers of dough are beginning to separate, 35–45 minutes.

**5** Once risen, brush the pastries evenly with the egg wash. Bake until evenly golden brown, 24–28 minutes. Remove and brush each with some of the reserved cherry soaking liquid, then sprinkle with crushed pistachios. Serve immediately.



