

Souffles

A souffle can be many things – hot or cold, savory or sweet, an appetizer, main dish, vegetable dish, or dessert. It can be an elegant dish with which to impress your guests or the ideal vehicle for using up leftovers for appealing family fare.

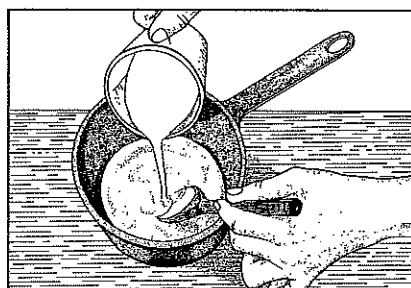
The best feature about this versatile dish is that it is surprisingly simple to make – just a matter of mastering a few techniques. Follow the directions given here; they are your step-by-step guide to successful souffle cookery.

The hot Souffle

The hot souffle is a combination of a thick white sauce blended with beaten egg yolks and leavened by stiffly beaten egg whites. Savory souffles are flavored by your choice of finely chopped or pureed meats, vegetables, cheese, or seafood added to the base sauce. On the other hand, in a dessert souffle, the white sauce is sweetened by the sugar and flavored with pureed fruits, liqueurs, extracts, or grated chocolate.

THE BASIC SOUFFLE 4-6 servings

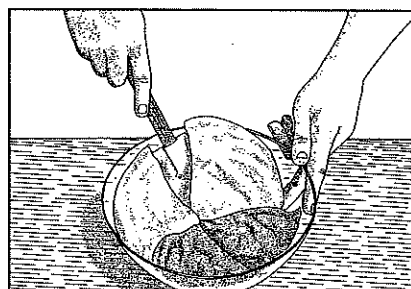
25 mL butter	2 Tablespoons	200 mL milk	¾ cup
25 mL flour	2 Tablespoons	seasoning (optional)	
2 mL salt	½ teaspoon	4 eggs plus two egg whites	4 + 2
dash of pepper	dash	1 mL cream of tartar	¼ teaspoon



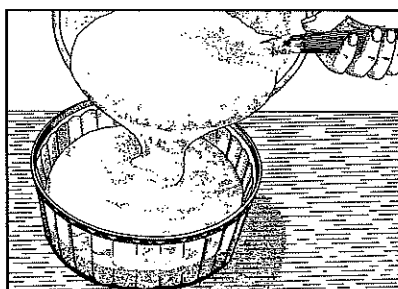
1. Preheat oven to 190°C (375°F). Melt butter in medium-sized saucepan over low heat. Stir in flour and salt. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture is smooth and bubbly. Stir in milk all at once. Continue stirring until mixture boils and is smooth and thickened.



2. Separate eggs. Beat yolks well and add some of the warm sauce mixture to egg yolks. Then combine yolk mixture with remaining sauce, blending thoroughly. If desired, add finely chopped filling ingredients and seasoning, stirring into the white sauce until well blended.* Set sauce aside to cool slightly.



3. Beat egg whites and cream of tartar in a large bowl until stiff but not dry. Fold some of the egg whites into the sauce to make it lighter, then gently but thoroughly fold the sauce into the remaining egg whites.



4. Carefully pour into prepared souffle dish or casserole.** Bake for 17 to 20 minutes until done.

*Try one of the following filling suggestions:

- 250 mL (1 cup) grated cheese and 1 mL (½ teaspoon) dry mustard
- 250 mL (1 cup) shredded, cooked carrot, 125 mL (½ cup) grated cheddar cheese, and 1 mL (½ teaspoon) dried dillweed
- 125 mL (½ cup) finely chopped, cooked chicken, 75 mL (⅓ cup) chopped mushrooms, and 5 mL (1 teaspoon) parsley
- 75 mL (⅓ cup) liqueur and 25 mL (2 Tablespoons) sugar (omit salt from basic souffle)

**Refer to information on "The Souffle Dish".

The Secret to Success

- The secret to a successful souffle is producing a stable egg white foam.

Separate eggs carefully so that no egg yolk slips in with the whites. The fat contained in egg yolks will interfere with the foam formation. Also, use a glass or metal mixing bowl, never a plastic one. Over time, the porous plastic will absorb soap, fat and other impurities which will prevent the whites from whipping properly.

Egg white foams are produced by the drying and stretching of the albumen (egg white) during beating. The decision as to when to stop beating is made on the basis of the appearance of the foam in the bowl when the beater is withdrawn and the bowl is tilted.

A perfect souffle foam should be beaten until stiff. The whites at the stiff peak stage must still be glossy, smooth, and moist in appearance but may slip slightly if the bowl is tipped. Air cells should be very small and the peaks should be soft enough so that only the tips fall over when the beater is withdrawn from the bowl. If the egg whites are dull or flaky, they are overbeaten.

- Never add egg yolks directly to a hot sauce all at once as they may begin to coagulate too rapidly and form lumps. Stir a small amount of the hot mixture into the yolks to warm them and then stir the warmed egg yolk mixture into the remaining hot mixture.
- To combine beaten egg whites with sauce base, gently fold in a circular motion, down one side of bowl and up through the center, turning bowl slightly after each folding. A rubber spatula or wire whisk may be used.
- For a "top-hat" effect, draw a circle on the surface of the souffle 2 to 3 cm (1 inch) in from the rim of the dish, with a knife or spoon.
- Don't open the oven door while the souffle is baking until five minutes before the end of the baking time.
- A souffle is done when the top is golden or feels firm to the touch, and jiggles only slightly when gently shaken.
- The souffle should be served as soon as it is baked. For each serving, include some of the moist center, the side and bottom crusts. The souffle may be served with a sauce spooned over each portion.
- For a quick-to-make souffle, substitute canned cream soup for the white sauce.
- Almost any souffle can be baked in individual-sized dishes 275 mL (10 oz.) capacity. Reduce the baking time by 8 to 10 minutes.

The Souffle Dish

A souffle dish is a straight-sided bowl made of ovenproof glass or pottery. Because souffles are served directly from oven-to-table, select a dish that is attractive as well as practical. Size is all important as the batter should fill the dish from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{7}{8}$ full to allow the souffle to rise 5 to 8 cm (2 to 3 inches) above the dish. Usually a four-egg souffle requires a litre dish (1 quart); six-egg souffles should be made in a 1.5 litre (1.5 quart) dish.

Depending on the recipe, the dish may or may not be greased. An ungreased dish allows the souffle to cling to the side of the dish as it rises. A greased dish sprinkled with flour, bread crumbs, parmesan cheese, or sugar will give the souffle a delicately flavored crust.

If a souffle dish is filled only $\frac{3}{4}$ full, it won't be necessary to extend the height of the dish. But, if the dish is filled to the top, a collar is needed to guide the height of the souffle. To make a collar, cut a band of waxed or buttered paper, double thickness, 10 cm (4 inches) wide and long enough to go around the dish, allowing for at least an 8 cm (3 inch) overlap. Butter and dust the band. Wrap it around the outside of the dish with the buttered side in and fasten with paper clips or string. The collar should extend 5 to 8 cm (2 to 3 inches) above the rim of the container.

The cold Souffle

A cold souffle or mousse is a light, airy mixture set with gelatin. Although not a true souffle, it borrows the name because it resembles the shape of the hot souffle.

The beaten egg whites are used to lighten the souffle mixture, not leaven it. The high rise of the souffle is obtained by over-filling the souffle dish; a collar or band around the dish is used to support the souffle mixture until it has been chilled and set.

Cold Lemon Souffle

8 eggs, separated	8
2 envelopes unflavored gelatin	2
175 mL sugar	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
250 mL lemon juice	1 cup
125 mL water	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
15 mL grated lemon rind	1 Tablespoon
175 mL sugar	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup

1. Mix together gelatin, 175 mL sugar, beaten egg yolks, lemon juice, and water. Cook in double boiler over hot water, stirring constantly until gelatin dissolves and mixture thickens (about 10 minutes). Add lemon rind. Chill until mixture mounds slightly when dropped from a spoon.
2. Beat egg whites until stiff but not dry. Gradually add 175 mL sugar, beating until very stiff. Strain gelatin mixture and fold it into the beaten whites.
3. Pour the mixture into a 2 litre souffle dish fitted with a wax paper collar. *Smooth the surface of the souffle and chill until firm. To serve, gently remove the paper collar. Garnish with whipped cream, grated lemon rind and maraschino cherries. Yield: 8-10 servings.

**Refer to information on "The Souffle Dish".



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