

Easy festive puff pastry recipes

1. Nutella Christmas Tree



Ingredients:

1(500g)packet ready to roll puff pastry
4 - 5 tablespoons Nutella, or chocolate spread, room temperature
1 egg, lightly beaten

gas mark 5. Line large baking tray with foil and grease

- Preheat oven 190°C, with oil.
- Cut the block of pastry in half, then roll out two sheets 28x33cm (11x13 in) on a lightly floured surface. Try to make sure that the sheets are about the same size. Lay the first sheet out on the prepared baking tray.
- Very gently, score a rough shape of a Christmas tree (triangle) with a knife, just so that when you spread over the Nutella, you have a guide for where the tree will be. Try to maximize the space and leave the base of the triangle as wide as possible, and leaving a little space for a star at the top. With the back of a spoon, spread the Nutella thinly in the triangle area.
- Place the second sheet of pastry on top, cut around the triangle shape and tree trunk, removing pastry edges, and very lightly, score where the trunk of the tree will be as a guide, wider at the base, getting thinner at the top. Pressing the knife blade rather than slicing, begin cutting the pastry to form the branches, following the line of the trunk and getting narrower the further up they go.
- Beginning at the base, twist the pastry away from you, trying to get in two turns on the lower branches. Continue moving up the tree, twisting away from you as you go. If desired, cut out a star with the trimmed pastry and place on the baking tray. Brush the star and tree with lightly beaten egg. Bake in the preheated oven for 12 to 15 minutes, or until risen and golden brown.

2. Windmill mince pies

Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper, and preheat oven to 200°C.



Ingredients:

1 sheet ready-rolled puff pastry
Mincemeat
Marzipan (optional)
1 egg, lightly beaten

- Roll out pastry sheet and cut out squares, approx. 8 x8cm or smaller if desired. Use a sharp knife to cut into the corners of the squares, leaving space uncut in the centre of each square for the filling. Put a dot of marzipan and some mincemeat into the centre of each square before folding in the corners to create a star shape. Take each alternating corner and bring them together into the centre of the star. Pinch them together in the middle to seal the tips of pastry together.
- Brush with beaten egg, then bake for 12-15 minutes until golden. Dust with icing sugar when cool.
- You can vary these by using jam or chocolate spread as a filling, or make a savoury version with cheese spread, sprinkled with grated cheese and paprika.

3. Cheese stars



Roll out a sheet of puff pastry, cut out star shapes and brush with beaten egg, then sprinkle with grated cheddar. Bake for 10-12 mins at 180°C, and if you have several size cutters, you can layer the stars and fix with a cocktail stick to make trees. You could use other cutters, and this is a great recipe for the children to do!