



18TH CENTURY Chocolate Puffs

by Laura Kumin

Prep Time **15 min** / Cook Time **1 hr** / Servings **24**



People of the late 18th century enjoyed a wide variety of sweets frequently referred to as sweetmeats. They included many forms of candied fruits and flowers, as well as lozenges and chocolates. Below is a recipe from *The Hamilton Cookbook* by Laura Kumin for chocolate, gluten-free treats. Think of them as a cross between cookies and candy. They're titled Chocolate Puffs, because that is what Richard Briggs named them in his 1792 book, *The New Art of Cookery*.

Ingredients

- 1 cup superfine sugar + 2 tablespoons
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa, preferably Dutch processed + 1 ¼ tablespoons
- 1 egg white from large egg
- 1 pinch cream of tartar, optional

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 225 F. Set aside two parchment-lined cookie sheets.
- In a medium-small bowl, whisk together the sugar and cocoa until they are a uniform color. Set the mixture aside.
- With a hand beater, stand mixer or clean whisk, whip the egg white until it is very frothy and beginning to stiffen. (When using a hand or stand mixer to whip egg whites, start at a low speed and slowly raise the speed to medium. Do not use the higher speeds because egg whites whipped that way are less stable.) If desired, add a pinch of cream of tartar to help the egg white froth and stiffen. Once the egg white reaches the soft peak stage, slowly add the sugar/cocoa mixture while continuing to beat the egg white. The result should be a thick paste.
- Wet your hands slightly and form the batter into small coins, 3/4 inch diameter. Place them on the parchment-lined cookie sheets. Optional step (which I discovered after the book was published) - if you let the formed cookies sit on the cookie sheet for about 30 minutes before baking, they seem to puff up more. Bake for 1 to 1 ½ hours.
- Store the cookies in a tightly covered container.

Recipe Notes

I added confectioners' sugar on the top of the cookies for the photos. While it's a nice visual touch, that sprinkling of sugar does not affect their taste. The recipe in the book allows for cooking 60-90 minutes. At 60-70 minutes, the cookies are crunchy. After that, they begin to become like biscotti, great for dipping. If you keep your hands reasonably damp and smooth out the outside of the cookie they look smooth after they cook. If you handle them less, they look more like Amaretto di Saronna.