

Tan Phay Shing holds a postgraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering and worked in engineering research before she chose to stay home to spend time with her children. However, her experiments did not end when she left the lab. She continues to conduct experiments, albeit of a different kind, in her home kitchen, where she bakes creative macarons, choux pastries, cookies, buns and chiffon cakes.

Phay Shing shares a blog, LovingCreations4U, with Susanne Ng, bestselling author of *Creative Baking:* Chiffon Cakes, Creative Baking: Deco Chiffon Cakes and Creative Baking: Deco Chiffon Cake Basics, where they delight readers with their unique creations.



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Deco Choux Pastries

Tan Phay Shing



For Review Only

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All photos by Hongde Photography except step-by-step photos by Tan Phay Shing

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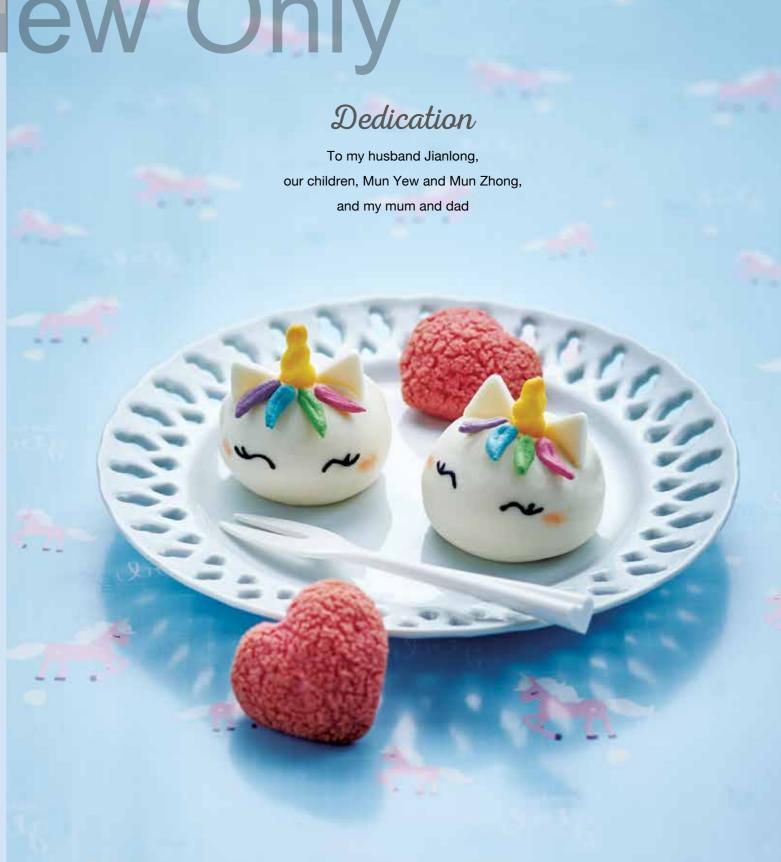
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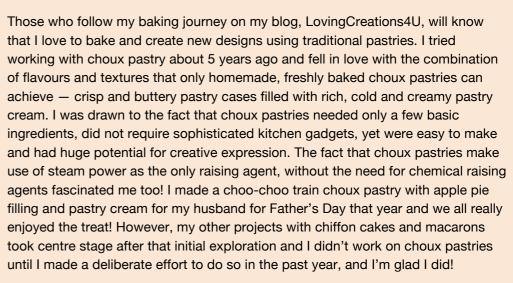
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Choux pastry takes many forms and you may be familiar with cream puffs, profiteroles and eclairs (and perhaps also gougère, Paris-Brest and chouquettes). You may also have seen some cute animal choux au craquelin creations sold at specialty cafés. But beyond these, there is a wide variety of cute and colourful creations that you can make out of choux pastry and I'll share them with you in this book!

From the basic choux pastry batter, you'll be able to create chocolate-coated pastry cases as well as craquelin (or cookie dough) covered pastry. I have also included both sweet and savoury entries for fillings so you can make lovely savoury creations too! Feel free to explore other filling flavours and create your own. Although good temperature control is required for making deco choux pastries, it is not as challenging as chiffon cakes and macarons. Even my friend who seldom bakes made perfect choux pastry on her first try! So, if you enjoy baking and making cute creations, this book is for you.

Happy baking!

Phay Shing



Basic Tools & Equipment

Saucepan

Sieve

pastry to rise evenly.

The only criterion for the saucepan is that it needs to be at least 5 cm deep to hold the liquid. It does not matter whether it is non-stick or not.

I use a silicone spatula with a firm handle to mix the batter. You may also use a wooden spoon. Some bakers prefer to use a stand mixer with a dough hook or paddle attachment to incorporate the eggs into the batter. This is not necessary but can be helpful when working with large batches of batter.

Mixing Bowl
Choose a heatproof mixing bowl that is

Choose a heatproof mixing bowl that is large enough for incorporating the eggs into the batter.

It is best to sift the flour before it is added into the liquid and fat mixture to remove any lumps in the flour, and ensure a smooth batter.

Piping Bags

Reusable piping bags are fine, but I prefer using disposable piping bags as the pastry batter is very sticky and can be difficult to wash off. Choose good quality bags that won't split from the pressure exerted on it during piping.

Piping Tips

I prefer using open star tips when making pastry cases as the ridges created on the piped batter helps to control the cracking on the surface during baking. You can use round piping tips if you do not want the pastry cases to have these ridge marks, but there will be random cracks on the surface. When cookie dough is used to cover the top of the pastry case, it does not matter what type of piping tip is used as the cookie dough layer helps the

Baking Trays
Use good quality baking trays that will not warp even when baked at 200°C.



- Lining the baking tray with baking paper or a silicone mat during baking will ensure that the baked pastry cases can be removed easily after baking. Both work well although baking paper may crease a little during baking. It may be helpful to use perforated mats for baking large choux cases such as eclairs or Paris-Brest to ensure that the base of the pastry case is flat after baking.
- Digital Weighing Scale
 Ingredients measured by weight will produce more consistent results compared to cup measurements. Choose a scale that can measure in 1-g increments.
- Oven Thermometer

 This is necessary to ensure that the oven temperature is controlled and consistent between batches.
- Serrated Knife and Fruit Knife
 A small serrated knife or fruit knife is useful for slicing or cutting holes in the baked pastry cases for adding the filling. A knife can also be useful for cutting the cookie dough if you do not have the appropriate cookie cutter.
- Zester or Grater

 The zester/grater is a very handy tool to use when it comes to assembling deco choux pastries. It is used to shave or file off uneven surfaces of small parts so that they fit better when attached to the main choux piece.
- Rolling Pin
 A rolling pin with guides will help ensure the craquelin is of even thickness especially across batches.
- Cookie Cutters

 Cookie cutters in various shapes and sizes can be used to cut the craquelin for decorating the choux pastry. You can also make your own cutters (circles, rectangles or squares) using food grade acetate sheets if you are not able to find the right cookie cutter for your design.
- Toothpicks

 Toothpicks are useful for painting fine features on the baked pastry cases using melted chocolate or royal icing.

Flour

Choux pastry is traditionally made using high-protein wheat flour like bread flour, although plain flour, which has a lower protein content, can also be used. Flour with a higher protein content will produce a crispier and more structurally stable pastry case. Some bakers use a mix of high-protein flour and low-protein wheat flour such as cake flour or pastry flour, to give the resulting pastry case sufficient structural stability but a more tender bite. This is ideal if the filled pastries need to sit for several hours.

I use bread flour for making deco choux pastries for its resulting texture and stability, and mix in some low-protein flour should the filled pastries need to sit for more than a few hours before consumption.

To make the craquelin that is placed on top of the piped batter, I use plain flour or cake flour.

Liquid

Water or a combination of water and milk in the ratio 1:1 is used as the liquid base for making the batter. The process requires the flour to absorb hot water quickly and gelatinise. In my experience, using just water does this more effectively than a combination of water and milk, although milk imparts a richer flavour. I use only water as this ensures a smoother finishing for the pastry cases. I make up for the richness in flavour by using an appropriate filling or cookie dough coating.

Fat

Unsalted butter is usually used for making the pastry cases as it provides a lovely fragrance and richness. Salted butter can be used but you may have to omit or reduce the amount of salt added. Oil such as olive oil or cooking oil can be used for a lighter tasting pastry, but it will not be as fragrant and tasty as using butter. In this book, I use a combination of butter and oil to get the best out of both types of fat.

Unsalted butter is an essential ingredient for making the craquelin.



Eggs play an important role in making choux pastry. Eggs contain moisture which helps the pastry to puff up during baking, and protein which provides structural stability once the pastry case is baked. It also gives the baked pastry cases its lovely golden brown colour. Although the amounts of all the other ingredients are exact, the amount of eggs used may vary depending on the consistency of the batter. You may choose to replace a whole egg in the basic recipe with 2 egg whites if you prefer a lighter and crisper crust.

Salt

Salt enhances the taste of the pastry cases and also helps to balance the sweetness of the sweet fillings. It also helps to reduce the number of large cracks on the pastry cases.

Sugar

Unlike salt, sugar is an optional ingredient especially if the filling is sweet. I include sugar in the basic recipe to add a little flavour, but you may choose to omit it.

Sugar is an essential ingredient for making the craquelin. White or brown sugar can be used.

Food Colouring

I use gel food colouring for colouring the craquelin and choux pastry batter as the colour is more intense and it does not add additional moisture into the mix. For black, brown and green, I use natural powders such as charcoal powder, cocoa powder and matcha powder. These powders impart colour as well as flavour. I use oil-based food colouring for colouring white chocolate as gel food colouring may cause the white chocolate to seize if too much is added.

Chocolate

Chocolate is used to coat choux pastry cases. It can also be piped onto the pastry cases to add fine details. For white chocolate, I use compound white chocolate as it is easier to work with and does not separate as easily as white chocolate couverture. For dark chocolate, I use either couverture or compound dark chocolate as they are both easy to work with. When melting chocolate, use low heat and take your time. Stir frequently to prevent overheating the chocolate. You may add a bit of vegetable shortening to get a thinner consistency, which will be easier to use when coating whole pastry cases. If you have a candy thermometer, you can monitor the chocolate temperature to make sure that you don't overheat it. White or milk chocolate should not exceed 43°C and dark chocolate should not exceed 46°C.

Basic Choux Pastry Or Review

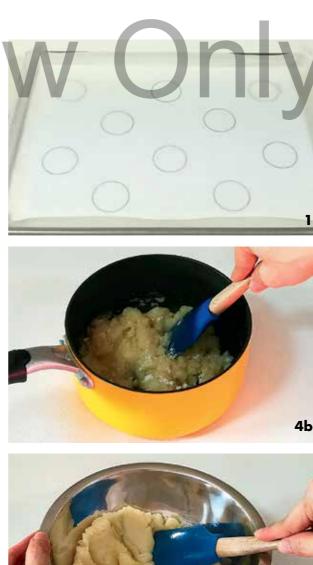
Most culinary schools will prescribe the ratio of 2:1:1:2 for liquid, fat, flour and eggs. Most recipes follow this ratio with perhaps a little less fat, a little more flour and a little less egg. My recipe is what I find works best for making deco choux pastries that are colourful and fanciful in shape. Feel free to replace or substitute any ingredient as mentioned in the Basic Ingredients section (page 13) according to your preference. This recipe makes about 16 round pastry cases or 10 long eclair cases.

100-105 g water 20 g unsalted butter 20 g olive oil 1 tsp sugar (optional) 1/2 tsp salt 60 g bread flour, sifted 95-105 g eggs (about 2 eggs), lightly beaten

- 1. Place paper template on baking tray and line with baking paper. When batter is ready, dab some on four corners of baking tray to keep baking paper in place.
- 2. Preheat oven to 200-210°C. Set oven rack to middle position. Use top and bottom heat only.
- 3. Place water, butter, oil, sugar and salt into a saucepan. Bring to a boil, while stirring with a spatula, until butter is melted.
- 4. Once water is boiling, remove from heat. Add flour all at once (4a) and stir quickly until a dough-like batter is formed (4b). Knead batter to gelatinise flour and remove any lumps (4c).
- 5. Continue kneading for 3-5 minutes over low heat to cook off any excess moisture. Depending on the type of pan used, this may leave a film on the base of the pan. The batter should form a ball when you stir it vigorously.
- 6. Transfer batter to a mixing bowl and continue kneading using the spatula for a minute. Spread it out in the bowl for about 5 minutes to let it cool to body temperature. If using a stand mixer, mix the batter at the lowest speed for a few minutes until it is cool.
- 7. Add about half the portion of beaten egg (7a). Use the spatula to mix and press the mixture until the egg is incorporated. Once the mixture appears homogeneous, add about half the remaining portion of egg and mix until incorporated (7b). Add remaining egg a teaspoonful at a time and watch the consistency carefully. The batter is ready once it appears smooth and shiny, and falls off the spatula in about 3 seconds when lifted (7c). If the batter is already runny and less than 90 g egg was added, it means the dough was insufficiently cooked before the eggs were added. When mixing, press the batter against the side of the bowl to release any trapped air bubbles.



Scan the QR code to view a video tutorial on making basic choux pastry cases.













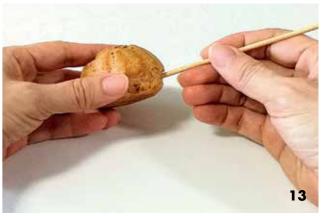
8. Transfer batter to a piping bag fitted with a piping tip of your

- Transfer batter to a piping bag fitted with a piping tip of you choice. I used a 12-mm open star tip in the photos.
- 9. If piping rounds, place piping tip about a centimetre away and perpendicular to the surface of the baking tray (9a). Apply pressure to the piping bag and let the batter spread out on the baking tray. Release pressure and give the piping bag a little twirl before lifting off (9b). For puffier pastry cases, pipe tall mounds of batter. Wet your finger and pat down any peaks left from lifting off the piping tip (9c). This will prevent the little peaks from burning when baked.
- 10. You may now freeze the piped batter and pop frozen portions into a freezer-safe bag and bake it another time. Simply increase the baking time by 5 minutes from the start.
- 11. To bake, dab some water on the baking tray around the piped batter. This will create steam during baking which will help the pastry rise.
- 12. Place the baking tray into the oven. Lower the oven temperature to 190°C and bake for 10 minutes, then lower it to 180°C and bake for 10-25 minutes. Lower the oven temperature a third time to 130°C and bake for 10-20 minutes with the fan mode on. This last segment of baking is to thoroughly dry out the pastry cases without further browning. The baking time and temperature will depend on the size of the piped pastry and whether you want it to retain its colour. What is prescribed here is for regular pastry cases with a golden brown colour. Do not open the oven during the first half of baking time as any steam escaping from the oven will cause the pastry cases to deflate. If you notice that the cases are browning too fast, however, you may open the oven door briefly during the second half of baking time to let the oven temperature drop. Use an oven thermometer to ensure accurate temperature during baking. You may have to adjust the baking temperature and time as each oven is different.
- 13. Use a skewer to make a small hole at the bottom of each baked pastry case for steam to escape. This is optional if you have thoroughly dried out the cases in the oven at low temperature.
- 14. Let the pastry cases cool completely before filling. They can now also be stored if not filling immediately. To fill, use a small knife to slice a third off the top of the pastry cases or use the knife to make a hole at the base, large enough to insert the piping tip.
- 15. Choux pastry is best eaten freshly filled to enjoy the crispness.







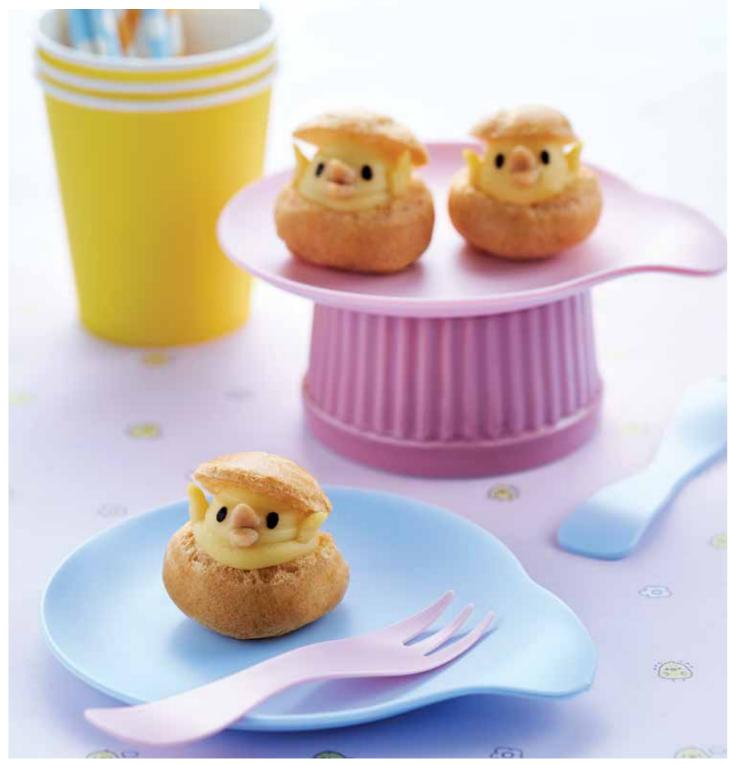






Baby Chick Choux For Review O

Makes about 40 mini pastries



Choux Pastry Case

1 portion basic choux pastry batter (page 16)

Finishing

Peanut butter chips
Dark compound chocolate
Icing sugar (optional)

Suggested Filling

Vanilla pastry cream (page 24)

- Prepare baking tray with 2.5-cm circle template (page 115).
 Preheat oven to 200°C. Set oven rack to middle position.
- Prepare choux pastry batter and transfer to a piping bag fitted with a 10–12-mm round piping tip. Pipe mounds of batter using template as a guide. Dip a finger in water and tap down any peaks. Dab some water on baking tray around piped batter.
- 3. Place baking tray in oven. Lower temperature to 190°C and bake for 10 minutes. Lower temperature to 180°C and bake for 10–15 minutes. Lower temperature a third time to 130°C and bake for 10 minutes with fan mode on. Remove from oven and leave to cool completely on baking tray.
- 4. Use a small knife to slice pastry cases horizontally, about one-third from the top. Set aside.
- 5. Prepare vanilla pastry cream (page 24). Cook until it is able to hold firm peaks while still warm in the saucepan. Chill as instructed. Transfer 2–3 Tbsp chilled pastry cream into a piping bag and cut a 5-mm hole at the tip. Transfer remaining pastry cream into a piping bag fitted with a 10-mm round tip.
- 6. Fill pastry cases generously with pastry cream from piping bag fitted with piping tip. Pipe wings with pastry cream from piping bag without piping tip.
- 7. Cut a peanut butter chip into quarters and carefully stick onto pastry cream to form beaks. Use your fingers to reshape the chip if necessary.
- 8. Melt some dark compound chocolate and spoon into a piping bag. Cut a small hole at the tip and pipe eyes.
- 9. Replace top of pastry cases and sift with icing sugar, if desired.
- 10. Keep assembled cases chilled until ready to serve. These are best consumed within a few hours of filling.



Rainbow Eclairs For Review E









Choux Pastry Case

1 portion basic choux pastry batter (page 16), made by replacing 15 g bread flour with cake flour or pastry flour

Glaze and Finishing

300-350 g white compound chocolate

60-70 g vegetable shortening Red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple oil-based food colouring

Suggested Filling

Praline mousseline cream (page 28)

Note: Use a perforated mat when baking eclairs for even expansion in the oven.

- 1. Prepare baking tray with eclair template (page 120). Preheat oven to 200°C. Set oven rack to middle position.
- Prepare choux pastry batter. Replace 15 g bread flour with cake flour or pastry flour. Transfer batter to a piping bag fitted with a 12-15-mm open star tip. Hold the piping tip at a 45° angle to the baking tray and pipe a straight line. End by releasing pressure and quickly flicking the piping tip upwards and towards the end of the line of batter. Dip a finger in water and tap down any peaks. Dab some water on baking tray around piped batter.
- Place baking tray in oven. Lower temperature to 190°C and bake for 15 minutes. Lower temperature to 180°C and bake for 20 minutes. Lower temperature a third time to 130°C and bake for 10-12 minutes with fan mode on. Remove from oven and leave to cool completely on baking tray.
- 4. Make two holes at the base of each pastry case, one at each end for filling. Set aside.
- 5. Prepare glaze. Melt white compound chocolate with vegetable shortening. Stir to mix. Divide into 6 equal portions and add a different food colouring to each portion. Work quickly before the mixture firms up. If it does, heat in the microwave oven for several seconds at Medium and stir.
- Transfer coloured chocolate into separate piping bags and make a small hole at the tip of each bag.
- 7. Pipe the first colour onto the pastry, then use a toothpick to nudge the chocolate into place. Work quickly. Repeat with each colour until pastry is fully coated.
- 8. Gently tap coated eclair on baking tray to smoothen out any peaks in chocolate. Use a clean finger to remove any excess glaze from sides of pastry by sweeping the sides in one smooth motion. Let chocolate glaze set fully before filling pastry.
- 9. Fill pastry cases and keep refrigerated until ready to serve. These are best consumed within a few hours of filling.











Choux Pastry Case

1 portion basic choux pastry batter (page 16)

Craquelin

- 2 portions basic craquelin (page 20)
- Pink, yellow, green, blue, purple and white gel food colouring

Finishing

Styrofoam cone covered with aluminium foil or fondant Toothpicks, melted chocolate or royal icing (page 33)

Suggested Filling

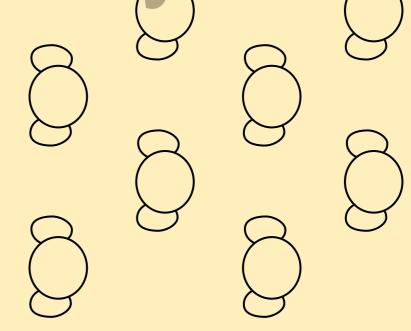
Whipped dark chocolate ganache (page 29)

Note: To cut the craquelin, I usually choose a cookie cutter that is about 5-mm larger than the piped batter so that the coating will cover the sides of the baked pastry case. If you prefer to expose more of the pastry case, use a cookie cutter of the same size as the piped batter.

- 1. Prepare craquelin. Divide the 2 portions of basic craquelin into 5 equal portions. Add a different food colouring to each one. Mix well. Add some white food colouring, if you prefer the colours a pastel shade. Roll into sheets and freeze until firm.
- 2. Use a 2.5-cm round cookie cutter to cut circles from frozen sheets of coloured craquelin. You should get 80-100 circles. Place cut-outs on a lined tray and freeze until firm. You may prepare this ahead of time.
- 3. Prepare baking tray with 2-cm circle template (page 114). Preheat oven to 200°C. Set oven rack to middle position.
- 4. Prepare choux pastry batter and transfer to a piping bag fitted with an 8–10-mm round piping tip. Pipe tall mounds of batter using template as a guide. Dip a finger in water and tap down any peaks. Dab some water on baking tray around piped batter.
- Place a frozen craquelin cut-out on top of each mound.
- 6. Place baking tray in oven. Lower temperature to 180°C and bake for 15 minutes. Lower temperature to 160°C and bake for 5-10 minutes. Lower temperature a third time to 130°C and bake for 15 minutes with fan mode on. Remove from oven and leave to cool completely on baking tray.
- Make a hole at the base of each pastry case for filling.
- Fill pastry cases with whipped dark chocolate ganache.
- 9. Attach pastry cases to prepared cone using toothpicks, melted chocolate or royal icing, beginning from bottom up.
- 10. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve. These are best consumed within a day of filling.

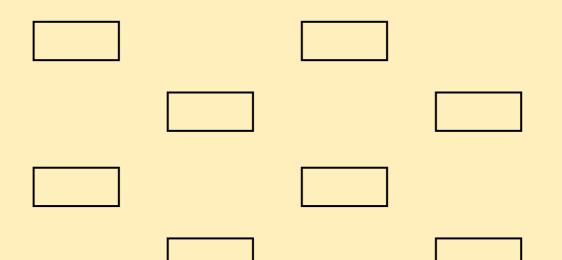
Rainbow Eclair Choux (page 58) (Enlarge 200%)

Koala Choux (page 62) (Enlarge 200%)

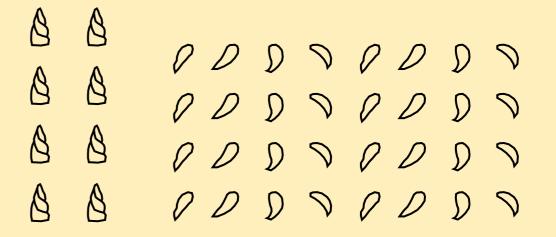


Bear Choux (page 60)

(Enlarge 200%)



Unicorn Choux (page 66) (Enlarge 200%)



Horn Mane