

FRANÇOIS PERRET
Pastry Chef at the Ritz Paris
with **ÉRIC NEBOT**

The Chef in a
TRUCK

The Fabulous Culinary Odyssey
of a French Pastry Chef in California



Flammarion

WHISKY BABAS WITH CHANTILLY CREAM

After testing this recipe with different alcohols while we were filming the series, I concluded that I liked whisky best (but I already knew that). I also discovered, thanks to Jade, that gin works well, too. As for Tom, he had a soft spot for tequila. Let your own personal tastes guide you when choosing the right liquor for your babas. For my part, Lagavulin whisky seems perfect and, I thought, why not add a couple of grinds of black pepper and a little grated chocolate as well? If your preference is for gin, try adding lemon zest and maybe some grated root ginger. The choice is yours!

MAKES 8-10

PREPARATION: 2 HOURS * RESTING: OVERNIGHT * COOKING: 35 MINUTES * LEVEL: EASY

INGREDIENTS

Baba dough (made 1 day ahead)

2¼ cups (7 oz./200 g)
all-purpose flour
¾ tsp (4 g) *fleur de sel* sea salt
4 tsp (20 g) superfine sugar
⅓ oz. (10 g) fresh yeast
2 tsp water
2 large eggs (½ cup/120 g)
¼ cup (2 oz./60 g) unsalted butter,
diced + extra for the molds

Soaking syrup (made 1 day ahead)

4 cups (1 L) water
2 cups (10½ oz./300 g) light brown
sugar
Generous ¾ cup (200 ml) whisky
Seeds from 1 vanilla bean

Chantilly cream

1¼ cups (300 ml) whipping cream
(33% fat)
6 tbsp (1¼ oz./50 g) confectioners'
sugar, sifted

Glaze (optional)

Apple jelly

To serve

Generous ¾ cup (200 ml) thick
crème fraîche

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To prepare the baba dough

Sift the flour into the bowl of the stand mixer and stir in the *fleur de sel* and sugar. Dilute the yeast in the water and add to the bowl, along with the eggs. Mix on low speed until a dough is obtained.

Increase the speed to medium and continue kneading until the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl. Gradually add the butter and knead until the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl again.

Lightly grease the individual baba molds or loaf pan with butter. Divide the dough between the molds (about 1 oz./30 g in each) or place in the loaf pan. Let rise for 15–20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C/Gas Mark 2). Bake the babas for 22 minutes, until golden.

Reduce the oven temperature to 250°F (130°C/Gas Mark ½). Unmold the babas and let them dry out in the oven for 13 minutes. This will help them better absorb the syrup.

To prepare the soaking syrup

Heat the water and sugar in a saucepan until the sugar dissolves, then bring to a boil. Let cool until the temperature of the syrup reaches 120°F (50°C). Add the whisky and vanilla bean seeds.

Place the babas in a shallow dish, then pour the syrup over them. Leave overnight in the refrigerator, as the babas must be thoroughly soaked with the syrup. Check the babas the next day and spoon over any syrup that has not been absorbed, if necessary.

To prepare the Chantilly cream

Whip the cream in a well-chilled bowl until it begins to thicken. Add the confectioners' sugar and continue whipping until the cream holds firm peaks. Keep chilled.

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Equipment

Stand mixer fitted with the dough hook

8–10 individual baba (mini savarin) molds or a loaf pan measuring 10 in. (26 cm) in length

Instant-read thermometer

Electric hand beater

Pastry bag fitted with a ½-in. (1-cm) fluted tip (or whipping siphon)

To glaze (optional)

Warm the apple jelly and brush it over the babas.

To assemble

Drain the baba or babas from the dish. If you have chosen to use traditional baba molds, fill the center of each baba with thick crème fraîche. Transfer the Chantilly cream to the pastry bag (or whipping siphon) and decorate with a swirl of cream. For the loaf pan baba, simply spoon over the crème fraîche and serve, with the Chantilly cream on the side.

