

SICILIAN SCIU ALLA RICOTTA

Traditional Sicilian Ricotta Cream Puffs

Prep: 25 min | **Cook:** 35 min | **Total:** approx. 1 hr 30 min | **Yield:** 12 pastries

Golden choux pastry shells generously filled with smooth, sweetened ricotta cream and dusted with powdered sugar.

Ingredients

Choux pastry

- 1 cup (240 ml) water
- 7 tbsp (100 g) unsalted butter
- 1 1/4 cups (150 g) all-purpose flour
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 tbsp (12 g) granulated sugar
- 1/4 tsp salt

Sweet ricotta filling

- 2 cups (500 g) well-drained whole-milk ricotta
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp (140 g) powdered sugar, or to taste
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 tsp finely grated orange zest (optional)
- 1/4 cup (40 g) mini chocolate chips (optional)

To finish

- Powdered sugar for dusting

Instructions

1. Make the ricotta cream

Drain the ricotta in a fine sieve over a bowl; if wet, refrigerate for several hours to remove excess whey.

Press through a sieve for a silky texture, then blend with powdered sugar and vanilla. Fold in optional orange zest or chocolate chips. Refrigerate until needed.

2. Prepare the choux dough

Heat oven to 400 F (200 C), conventional/static. Line a baking sheet with parchment.

Bring water, butter, sugar and salt to a gentle boil. Remove from heat and add flour all at once; stir firmly until a dough forms.

Return to low heat for 1-2 minutes, stirring until the dough pulls away from the pan and leaves a thin film.

Transfer to a bowl; cool 5 minutes. Beat in eggs one at a time, adding the last egg gradually until glossy dough falls slowly from the spatula in a V shape.

3. Pipe and bake

Pipe 12 generously sized mounds, leaving 2 inches (5 cm) between them. Smooth any peaks with a damp fingertip.

Bake 15 minutes at 400 F (200 C) without opening the door. Reduce to 350 F (175 C) and bake 20-25 minutes more, until firm, dry and golden.

Switch off the oven; crack its door for 5 minutes. Transfer pastries to a rack to cool completely.

4. Fill and serve

Slice each cooled pastry horizontally using a serrated knife.

Spoon or pipe generous ricotta filling onto each base. Replace the lids carefully.

Dust with powdered sugar just before serving.

Nonna's tips

Thick cream: Drain the ricotta very well and do not dilute with milk or cream. **Crisp shells:** Bake until thoroughly golden and fill close to serving. **Do not open the oven:** Keep the door closed during the initial rise.

Storage

Refrigerate filled pastries in an airtight container for up to 2 days; shells will soften. Keep unfilled shells airtight at room temperature for 1 day, or freeze up to 2 months. Refresh frozen shells at 300 F (150 C) for 5-8 minutes and cool before filling.

Nutrition per pastry (estimated)

255 kcal | Carbs 25 g | Protein 7 g | Fat 14 g | Saturated fat 8 g | Sugar 13 g | Fiber 0.5 g | Sodium 130 mg

Values are approximate and exclude optional chocolate chips.