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Forget the Tapestry - Try the Art of Pastry!

By Chef Mardav

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One of the finest specialties in all of cooking is the pastry chef's job - in my humble opinion. There is a reason these very special cooks earn that attractive pastry chef salary.

One doesn't merely go to pastry chef school or take a pastry class to enter a pastry chef career. I would describe the process as one in which it is necessary to attend pastry art school. Yes, good pastry is an art form.

The people who enter the field are artists. The job description for a pastry chef should always include words like "art," and "creativity," and phrases like, "artistic soul." Of course, if you are not in love with the art of pastry baking now, you will fall in love as soon as you begin your classes at baking and pastry school.

At baking and pastry school you will meet teachers who can break hearts with their croissants, and bring tears to your eyes with their madeleines. By the time you graduate with your chef's degree in pastry, you will understand the true art form that is pastry.

In the Meantime, Consider Following These Culinary Tips...

How can you make your pastry a little better right now? The answer is "chill out." It's not about relaxing, it's about chilling. When you are baking pastry, everything must be cold.

- **Chill the bowls and utensils that you will be using.** Put your tools in the refrigerator between steps. Start with cookies that don't break or crumble easily and don't go stale quickly.
- **Use a chilled marble slab to roll your pastry.** A chilled marble rolling pin would be a wonderful tool to use, as well.
- **Chill your ingredients.** The flour must be chilled, and all the shortening, butter, or fats you use must be chilled.
- **Chill your dough between each step.** Keep your dough cool, and you'll make a good pastry.

By practicing your pastry skills now, you'll be sure to know essential aspects of baking and pastry. When you begin pastry school, you'll be leaps and bounds ahead of your peers. Check back with Chef Mardav every week for more Culinary School preparation tips.

About the Author

Chef Mardav entered the kitchen at the age of seven and now, many years later, is still there. His writings on a variety of subjects have appeared in a wide range of publications. He is also a visual artist whose illustrations have appeared in Europe and the United States.

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