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I fell in love with almond croissants before any other kind; chocolate was always too rich, and straight-up croissants were delicious but not as appealing to my sugar-loving self. I couldn't help but be drawn to that flaky treat studded with toasted almonds and a rich, creamy almond center.

Almond Croissants

MAKES 8
CROISSANTS

All-purpose flour, for dusting

½ recipe Cheater Croissant Dough (page 271)

½ cup [150 g] Almond Cream (page 292)

Egg wash (see page 14)

½ cup [50 g] sliced almonds

Confectioners' sugar, for dusting (optional)

1) Line a sheet pan with parchment paper. Generously flour your work surface and roll out the croissant dough into a rectangle measuring 10 by 15 in [25 by 38 cm]. With a long side facing you, trim the dough so the edges are straight and it measures 14 in [35.5 cm] in length. **2)** Measure along the long side of the dough and cut long triangles measuring 10 in [25 cm] long and 3½ in [9 cm] wide at the base, for a total of eight croissants. **3)** Hold the base of the triangle and gently stretch the triangle until it is 12 in [30.5 cm] long. Place the triangle on the work surface and evenly spread 1 tablespoon of almond cream on the wide end of the croissant, leaving a ½ in [12 mm] border. Roll up the dough from the wide end to the tip. Place the rolled croissant on the prepared pan and make sure the pointy end

is tucked under (if it is on top, it can pop up during baking). Repeat with the remaining dough and space the croissants evenly out on the sheet pan (they will puff up quite a bit as they rise and bake). Cover the croissants loosely with plastic wrap, and let them rise until they are doubled in size and puffed, 2 to 2½ hours. **4)** Position an oven rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 400°F [200°C]. **5)** Remove the plastic and brush the croissants with egg wash. Sprinkle the tops with the sliced almonds. Bake until the croissants are deep golden brown and the layers do not look underbaked, 25 to 30 minutes. Move the sheet pan to a wire rack and let the croissants cool completely. Dust with confectioners' sugar, if desired. Croissants are best eaten the same day they are made.



I developed this recipe while trying to find the perfect base for Kolaches (page 133).
It is a dreamy dough to work with—soft and elastic, and it rolls out so smooth.

Sour Cream Dough

MAKES 2.5 LBS
[1.1 KG] OF DOUGH

½ cup [120 g] water, at room temperature
1 tablespoon active dry yeast
¾ cup [180 g] sour cream, at room temperature
1 large egg, at room temperature
4 large egg yolks, at room temperature
½ cup [100 g] granulated sugar
1½ teaspoons salt
4 cups plus 2 tablespoons [577 g] all-purpose flour
8 tablespoons [1 stick or 113 g] unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces, at room temperature

1) Grease a large bowl. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, combine the water and yeast on low speed. Let sit until the yeast has dissolved, about 5 minutes, then add the sour cream, egg, egg yolks, granulated sugar, and salt and mix until well combined. Add the flour, mixing on low speed until incorporated, 1 to 2 minutes (the dough will be very sticky and will be in a puddle at the bottom of the bowl). Add the butter, one piece at a time, mixing until completely incorporated after each addition. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and the hook. Increase the speed to medium and mix until the dough is sticky but elastic, is starting to gather around the hook, and has mostly pulled away from the sides

but is still sticking to the bottom, 8 to 10 minutes. **2)** Gently pull on a small piece of the dough; you should be able to count to 5 without it tearing off. Transfer the dough to the greased bowl, cover with plastic, and let it rise for about 2 hours. The dough will have risen slowly during this time, increasing its volume by about half. Refrigerate the dough for at least 2 hours or overnight before using.

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This dough is inspired by many different recipes, but specifically Dominique Ansel's croissant MasterClass and Mandy Lee's laminated dough in her book *The Art of Escapism Cooking*. Mandy skips using the butter in a block, instead spreading room-temperature butter over the surface of the dough, and then proceeds with the folding. The results are still amazingly flaky, and it works great in applications such as Morning Buns (page 186), Prosciutto Gruyère Croissants (page 227), and Cruffins (page 205).

Cheater Croissant Dough

MAKES ABOUT 2½ LBS
[1.1 KG] OF DOUGH

1½ cups [360 g] warm water (100 to 110°F [35 to 42°C])
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon active dry yeast
4 cups plus 1 tablespoon [577 g] all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon [65 g] granulated sugar
2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
1½ cups [3 sticks or 339 g] European butter (preferably 83 to 84 percent butterfat), at room temperature (68°F [20°C]) and pliable

1) Grease a large bowl and set aside. In a small bowl or liquid measuring cup, stir together the water and yeast and let sit until the yeast has dissolved, about 5 minutes. **2)** In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, whisk together 4 cups [568 g] of the flour, the granulated sugar, and salt. Start the mixer on low speed and add the water-yeast mixture, followed by the melted butter. Continue to mix until all the ingredients are combined, 3 or 4 minutes (see Notes). The dough will be rough and bumpy, but it should be in one piece. Transfer the dough to the greased bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Let rise at room

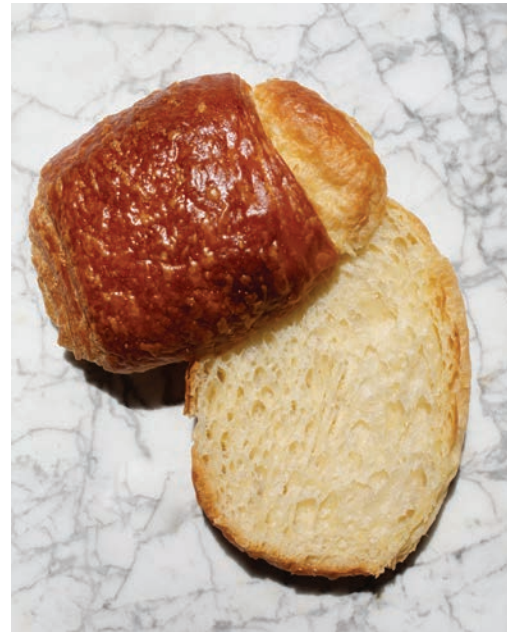
temperature until doubled in size, 1½ to 2 hours. **3)** With your fist, gently press down on the dough, releasing as much gas as possible. Place the dough on a large piece of plastic wrap and shape into a 10 by 12 in [25 by 30.5 cm] rectangle. Cover the dough with more plastic wrap, place it on a sheet pan, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

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4) In the bowl of the stand mixer now fitted with a paddle, beat together the European butter and the remaining 1 tablespoon of flour until combined and creamy, 2 to 3 minutes. The mixture should be pliable, but not melting; it should have the texture of cream cheese and should spread easily. 5) Remove the dough from the refrigerator, unwrap it, and place it on a lightly floured work surface. Roll out the dough into a 12 by 20 in [30.5 by 50 cm] rectangle. Spread the entire rectangle evenly with the butter, leaving a ½ in [12 mm] border around the rectangle. Make the first turn, or letter fold: Starting with a short side facing you, fold one-third of the dough onto itself, making sure the edges are lined up with each other. Then fold the remaining one-third of the dough on top of the side that has already been folded. Rotate the dough so the seam is facing to the right and one open end is facing you. Gently roll out the dough into a 10 by 18 in [25 by 46 cm] rectangle. (Each time you roll, the rectangle will get a bit smaller; see *how-to photos*, page 272.) Repeat the letter fold. Sprinkle flour on a sheet pan or plate, place the dough on it, and freeze the dough for 6 minutes—set a timer so you don't forget (see Notes)! (The freezer helps cool the dough slightly and makes the last turn less messy.) 6) Remove the dough from the freezer and repeat the letter fold again, making sure the seam is facing to the right. Roll out the dough again into a rectangle, this time about 8 by 16 in [20 by 40.5 cm]. Repeat the steps for one letter fold. Gently compress the dough with the rolling pin, and, depending on the recipe you are using it in, keep the dough in one piece or cut it into two equal portions. 7) If using the



dough immediately, place the piece being used in the freezer for 6 minutes to chill, and then proceed with the recipe. Otherwise, wrap the dough in plastic, place it in a freezer-safe bag, and freeze for up to 2 weeks. The dough can be removed from the freezer the night before using and placed in the refrigerator to thaw.

NOTES Don't overmix the dough when combining the ingredients; this can result in a tough, chewy texture.

If the butter is left in the freezer for more than 6 minutes, it will start to freeze, and then break apart as you roll it out. If you didn't remove the dough on time, let it sit at room temperature for a while until it rolls out easily.

The laminating process will help strengthen the dough.

These sandwich buns are folded up into a square, instead of the classic triangle, which makes them perfect vessels for Croissant Breakfast Sandwiches (page 229).

Croissant Sandwich Buns

MAKES 8 SANDWICH BUNS

All-purpose flour, for dusting

½ recipe Cheater Croissant Dough (page 271)

Egg wash (see page 14)

1) Line a sheet pan with parchment paper. 2) Generously flour your work surface and roll out the croissant dough into a 10 by 20 in [25 by 50 cm] rectangle. Measure along the long side of the dough and cut eight long rectangles measuring 10 in [25 cm] long and 2½ in [6 cm] wide at the base. 3) Holding the base of a rectangle, gently stretch until it is 15 in [38 cm] long. Place on the work surface and fold the dough over itself every 2 in [5 cm] for a total of four folds. Flip the pastry so the free end is on the bottom. Repeat with the remaining rectangles and space them out evenly on the

prepared sheet pan (they will puff up quite a bit as they rise and bake). Cover the croissants loosely with plastic wrap and let them rise until they are doubled in size and puffed, 2 to 2½ hours. 4) Position an oven rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 400°F [200°C]. 5) Brush the croissants with egg wash. Bake until the croissants are deep golden brown and the layers look completely baked, 25 to 30 minutes. Transfer the croissants to a wire rack and let them cool completely. Croissants are best eaten the day they are made.