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Pastry production

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Learner Resource

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Writer:

Retail Baking Project Team
TAFE NSW

Project Manager:

Terry Cross
Program Manager
Meat Processing and Bakery Services

Enquiries

Enquiries about this and other publications can be made to:

TAFE NSW – Community Services, Health, Tourism and Hospitality Division
Locked Bag No. 6
MEADOWBANK NSW 2114

Tel: 02-9942 3200 Fax: 02-9942 3257

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BAKERY PROCESSES

In this section of the guide you will find a description and explanation of the ingredients used to make the various pastry products; the processes that you will use, and finishing, packaging and storage requirements.

Setting oven temperatures

A well-made product is often ruined because of the wrong baking conditions. It is a good practice, if uncertain of the baking temperature, to inspect the goods during the baking period and take remedial action if required.

Covering with a sheet of paper can reduce excessive colouring of the product. Too much bottom heat will be minimised by using double trays. Top and bottom heat can also be controlled by the use of oven controls for top and bottom heating elements in electric ovens. One important point is that the products remain in the oven until they are baked.

It is always important to record an ideal baking temperature for a product based on the type, size and load in the oven. Baking temperatures will vary according to the type of oven used (e.g. deck oven, rack oven, fan forced, convection, etc.) and the nature and size of the product being baked. For example compare the baking conditions for small jam tarts with the baking conditions used for chou pastry, family apple pies and so on.

Make sure that the oven is preheated well in advance of baking, so that pastry products are baked with solid heat, to avoid scorching of the pastry during baking.

Pastry toppings

There are a range of toppings and glazes that can be used to finish a well-prepared product some of them include:

- fresh whipped cream
- fudge icing
- mock cream
- tempered fondant

- water icing
- apricot glaze
- roasted nuts
- fruit topping
- cheese topping
- ganache
- chocolate
- pastry cream or custards.

An inventive baker/pastry cook will experiment with different styles of toppings and finishing to present a finished product in the best possible way.

Pastry fillings

Some of the variety of fillings could include:

- fresh/dairy cream
- mock cream
- starched thickened fruit fillings
- cream cheese filling
- ganache
- pastry cream or custards
- frangipane
- meat fillings
- vegetable fillings
- seafood fillings.

A variety of fillings can be adapted according to the product requirements.

Finishing pastry products

When finishing a pastry, the best possible care should be taken, because the final appearance of a product can tempt your customers to purchase.

Using fruit

Fresh fruits need to be suitably ripe, well shaped and free of bruising, blemishes and mould growth.

Pie pack tinned fruits may be used for fillings, whereas dessert quality tinned fruits would be more suitable for post bake finishing.

Using a glaze

There are a variety of mediums that can be used as a glaze.

Before baking

- egg wash using whole eggs
- egg wash using yolks only
- milk and egg wash
- castor sugar/icing sugar.

After baking

- boiled apricot glaze
- bun wash
- sugar syrup
- commercial glaze
- starch based glaze
- fondant
- water icing
- ganache.

Storage of raw materials

Ingredients must be stored properly in the correct areas. Perishable ingredients (meats, dairy foods and so on) stored under refrigeration and dry goods (flour, sugar, milk powder, spices and so on) stored in a cool, dry, and well ventilated position. FIFO (first in first out) is the storage scheme that should be followed for all food items. This principle can also be applied when storing finished products and perishable ingredients. This ensures that older ingredients are used before the new ingredients.

With perishable products the longer it is stored, the less useful the product becomes. During storage there will be moisture loss, decay and bacterial actions, eventually completely spoiling the product. The storage temperature also affects these conditions. Regulated temperatures not only preserve the food products but also retard the ability of harmful bacteria to multiply.

The condition of the storage area is also very important. Storage areas should not be used to produce any food or this will attract insects, rodents and moisture could get into the ingredients. The storage area should always be kept clean and suitably ventilated with fresh air.

There are three areas of storage:

- dry
- refrigerated (0°C to 5° C)
- frozen (-18° C).

Temperature and humidity control is important in all three areas.

Dry storage

Dry storage is designed for foods that do not require refrigeration and have a long shelf life under existing environmental conditions. The goods stored in this include tinned goods, flour, sugar, oats, dried fruit and any item that does not need to be stored in a cold environment.

Refrigerated storage

Ingredients that are perishable are stored in refrigerated rooms called a cool room or in a refrigerator unit. All dairy products, eggs, butter and fresh fruit as well as finished products containing custard and cream, should be stored at between 1° C and 5° C.

Freezer storage

Most commercial freezer storage is set at -18° C. Foods stored in a freezer include fruit, ice cream, cakes, Danish pastries, and par baked goods, and so on. Goods stored in these conditions should be packed correctly to protect the product from freezer burn and physical breakages, and dated to keep track of products being stored.

Storing food

General rules to follow for chilling and freezing of pastry products:

- All foods need to be wrapped or covered and labelled and dated. This will ensure that they will keep moist, no skin will form, or odour transfer into other foods.
- Cooked food should be stored above raw food to prevent cross-contamination. An ideal situation would be to have a coolroom/cold storage for cooked food and a separate one for uncooked food.
- Thermometers must be checked regularly to check temperatures in storage areas.