

CROISSANT DAY 2018 | SPECIAL

# de Stolfe Journal *Candid*

**National Croissant Day**

# Candid Comments



## Le Croissant

*Anytime I can find an excuse to put out a special issue of the Journal, I try to do it! I decided to put out this issue to start including more obscure holidays and celebrations. Expect to see more special issues of unusual days like this in the future!*

Tuesday, January 30 in 2018 is National Croissant Day! So why not have a special issue dedicated to a favorite bread/pastry?!

So, on this day, find a local French bakery and/or restaurant and enjoy a yummy, buttery, flaky croissant!

Here are a few French bakeries/restaurants that are either found nationally or regionally in the United States. There are also many individual French bakeries all around the country ! (And of course, in France!) This is a random list.

- Mimi's Café
- La Madeleine French Bakery & Café
- La Boulangerie de San Francisco
- Whisk Crepes Café
- The French Laundry
- Bistro Le Cep
- Le Petit Cafe
- La Maison du Croque Monsieur

**National Croissant Day is Tuesday, January 30, 2018**

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# Types of Croissants

## Les Croissants Classiques | *The Classic Croissants*



**un croissant**

*a croissant*



**un croissant aux amandes**

*an almond croissant*



**pain au chocolat**

*chocolate croissant  
(literally, chocolate bread)*

*[There is an internal disagreement in France as to what this pastry is called! In the southwest parts of France, they rebelliously call this a “chocolatine”.]*

# Types of Croissants

## Les Viennoiseries | “Things of Vienna” (Other pastries)



**un brioche**

*a [sweet, buttery] bun/roll*



**un chausson aux pommes**

*an apple turnover*



**un pain aux raisins**

*raisin bread*

# History of the Croissant

Who does not like a delicious, buttery, flaky croissant?!  
One of excellent Austrian cuisine.

Wait! What?

The origin of the Croissant is not from France, but from Austria!

Confused? Well, let me tell you some more details.

The croissant of today is definitely French, but not because it was developed in France, but rather because it migrated to France. Several sources give some slightly different details, but here is the general story.

According to Bakers Maison of Australia (yes, Australia), here is what they say about the history of the croissant.

“The ‘kipferl’ was believed to be the spiritual ancestor of the croissant. Austrian based, the kipferl is a crescent-shaped morning sweet made plain or with nuts or other fillings. It is a denser and less flaky bread, made with a softer dough. The history of the kipferl dates back to the 13th century [the 1200s, Medieval times] where it is referenced as a sweet [basically a cookie] and wasn’t until the mid-16th century [mid 1500s] that the Austrian treat became part of the morning pastry category.

The turn of the 17th century [at about 1600] saw the first recipe for the style of dough that would be popularized by croissants was documented. Appearing in “Le Pâtissier françois” [“The French Pastry Chef”] by François Pierre de La Varenne, was the recipe for “Pâte feuilletée” [meaning puff pastry. Also, do not confuse “pâte”, meaning dough, with “pâté”, as in pâté de fois, or liver pate.]

Later that century, Vienna and Buda [the one half of the modern town of Budapest, Hungary (Buda and Pest)] gave birth to two more tales of the origin of the croissant. One such legend states that it was created in Buda to celebrate the defeat of the Umayyad forces by the Franks in the Battle of Tours, with the shape representing the Islamic crescent moon.



*Some kipferl from Austria.*



*Late Ottoman Empire flag (1844-1922)*

# History of the Croissant

Another origin story comes from Vienna, where the delicious, flaky pastry was created to celebrate the defeat of the Ottomans by Christian forces in 1683. The croissant was created as a reference to the Ottoman flags, an honor to the bakers who prevented the Turks' tunneling underneath their city by giving alarm to Christian authorities."

"...the first verified historical evidence of the croissant has been attributed to August Zang and his upscale pastry shop, Boulangerie Viennoise in the early 19th century. The bakery-like shop specialized in treats from his native Vienna, most notably the kipferl. His kipferl was made with flakier dough than traditional sweets, and people began to refer to it as a croissant because of its crescent shape. [The French word croissant means "crescent".]

A French Baker name Sylvain Claudius Goy wrote a recipe in 1915, that would cement the technique that remains at the heart of baking the modern croissant. His use of yeast differentiated his rolls from traditional puff pastry and gave birth to the croissant of present day."

Another explanation of the attack of the Ottomans is: "...in 1683, the Turkish Empire laid siege on Vienna, Austria. The Turks made several attempts to conquer the city by force, but were unsuccessful, so [they] decided to try underground tunnels. The bakers of Vienna, who worked in the basement storerooms, heard the sound of digging and alerted the city's army. For their vigilance, the bakers received high honors and thanks for their assistance in outwitting the Turks. In celebration [of the defeat], they baked their bread in the shape of a crescent moon—the symbol of the Ottoman Empire."

Various versions and variations of this classic pastry is found all over Europe by a variety of names and shapes.

Read more:

- <https://www.bakersmaison.com.au/about-us/blog/the-history-of-the-croissant>
- <https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/croissant-day/>
- <https://behind-the-french-menu.blogspot.com/2012/10/the-croissant-most-famous-of-all-french.html>

Austrian businessman, August Zang (1807-1888), knew of the French's love and admiration for Austrian cakes and pastries from his previous visit to Paris. He saw an excellent business opportunity to sell genuine Austrian pastries to the French people. In the 1800s, the Viennese, not the French, were leaders in all types of baking and pastry making. French chefs would travel to Vienna to study with the masters. In the late 1830s, Zang returned to Paris with the best Austrian pastry chefs he could convince to leave Vienna and opened a Viennese bakery in Paris at 93 Rue de Richelieu. He named the bakery Boulangerie Viennoise ("Viennese bakery") which sold all types of Viennese and Austrian pastries. The bakery was a success and soon had Parisians waiting in line for the delicious treats. It wasn't very long before French boulangeries and pâtisseries started copying Zang's Austrian pastries and selling them as French pastries.



*The Boulangerie Viennoise, as it was in 1909.*

# How to Make Croissants

First, croissants are not overly difficult to make, but do take a lot of time! Do not rush the process, nor take shortcuts! Anything you can buy in a can at the store is NOT a croissant and should never be confused as a croissant! With that said, have fun with the process!

I found a website that shows a really good step by step process of making a batch of croissants. You do need to take the time to make them rightly. Croissants are known for very flaky layers. I'm only going to show a few of the steps in photos. See the webpage here: [www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Make-Homemade-Croissants](http://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Make-Homemade-Croissants)

Here are the ingredients.

## French Croissants

3½ cups	all purpose flour
1 cup	warm water
1 teaspoon	active dry yeast
¼ cup	milk
½ tablespoon	melted butter
1 teaspoon	salt
1¾ cups	cold unsalted butter (3½ sticks, or 14 oz)

In addition, for an egg wash later in the process, mix:

1	egg
1 tablespoon	milk

For later in the process, you will also need:

- Two large baking sheets
- Parchment paper
- Plastic wrap
- Ruler, 18" or 24"

1. In a bowl, mix 1 cup of the all purpose flour with the warm water and yeast until the flour is mixed evenly and you don't see any clumps. Set the bowl aside and let rise for 1 hour.
2. Add the remaining flour, milk, the melted butter, and salt. Knead the mixture for a minute. Cover the bowl with a wet towel and let rest for 20 minutes.
3. Then, knead the dough by hand for 10 minutes. (You could do this in a stand mixer with a dough hook on low speed for about 20 minutes.) The dough should be uniformly mixed, smooth, and elastic once you finish kneading it. Wrap the dough with plastic wrap and refrigerate for half an hour.
4. Now starts the layering process!
  - Place the cold butter between two pieces of plastic wrap. Use a rolling pin and pound the butter into an 8" square (the measurements are important).
  - Lightly flour the surface and take the dough out of the fridge and roll the dough into a 9"x17" rectangle.
  - Take the square of butter and place it on the bottom half of the rectangle. (If the butter is too soft, put it in the fridge for a few minutes.) Align the dough and the sides of the butter square so they are even.



# How to Make Croissants

-Fold the top half of the dough over the bottom half. The square of butter should be completely enclosed in the dough. Press together the edges of the square to seal in the butter. Even out the dough into a smooth rectangle.

-With the rolling pin, roll out the dough, with the butter in it, into a 9"x18" rectangle (the measurements are important!).

-Then, fold the rectangle into thirds like a letter. (Start with a narrow end and fold up a third, then fold the top third down over it.) This is called a "turn", which you will do several more times!

-Turn the dough so that the single fold is on your left, like a book. Then, roll out the dough again into a the 9"x18" rectangle, and repeat the process again of folding like a letter.

-Wrap the dough in plastic and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

-After that, do two more "turns" of folding like a letter and refrigerate for another hour.

-The dough is now ready to be rolled out and shaped. However, you can keep it in the fridge for up to 24 hours before shaping, which lets it rise slowly and enhances the dough's flavor.

5. Once you are ready to shape the dough, line two large baking sheets with parchment paper. Cut the dough in half and put one half aside. You will notice all the layers you created from the many folds! On a lightly floured surface, roll each half of the dough into a 6½"x20" rectangle and trim the edges of the dough if necessary. The dough should be about ⅛" to ¼" thick. Place each half of the dough onto a baking sheet. Chill the dough for about 20 minutes or until firm.
6. With the dough chilled, lightly flour surface and put dough with long side towards you. You will use a process of notching to cut even shapes. Start on the bottom left side and measure 5" from the end, marking a small notch with a knife. This starts the base of the first triangle. Measure another 5" and make a second notch for the base of the second triangle. Repeat the notching until you have marked four sections, each five inches long (that's the 20").



# How to Make Croissants

7. Turn the rectangle around 180°. Now measure and notch 2½" from the bottom left side. Then measure 5" and notch again. Do this until you basically have 2½" on each end with three 5" sections in between. You are basically setting up the dough to cut out a zigzag of 7 triangles with two small leftover pieces. (Good for mini croissants.) Go ahead and cut the zigzag by lining up and cutting in between the notches opposite each other. The triangles will be flip flopped of each other. Either now or after you form this batch of dough, you will repeat the exact same process with the next rectangle of dough.
8. To shape the dough, use both hands and roll the triangle from the wide base up to the point. Turn the rolled up dough so that the triangle point is just on the bottom. Then carefully curve the roll into a crescent with the point side in the middle, as much or as slight as you want. (Note: if you plan to make sandwiches with the croissants, I would curve them to almost a circle.) Then, arrange the croissants on a sheet pan lined with parchment and cover with plastic wrap or a wet towel to proof. You can proof overnight in the fridge, about 3 hours in a cool place, or about 1 hour in a warm place.
9. To bake, heat oven to 375° and brush the croissants with the egg wash. Put both trays in the oven and bake for 15 minutes. Then rotate and switch the pans and bake for another 15 minutes.
10. Let cool until cool or eat slightly warm and enjoy!

*(Realize that your version of croissants won't look exactly like those from a French bakery because they have made croissants every day for years, while you just made them this one time! But, yours should still turn out good and be yummy.)*

