

Commercial Baking FAQ

General Statement:

This year we did decide to reduce the number of projects from four to three. Though some may find this less challenging, we find that this will give our competitors a better chance to complete each project with more finite detail. As this is the case, judges will be more closely scoring “following directions” as is expected at the national level. Each instruction given is vital to your final score. We’ve also added math into our projects as you will need to divide the recipe for Blueberry Muffins to properly execute the project.

As always with equipment lists, you are free to bring more at the discretion of the judge. You are not permitted to have any food substances of any kind. Judges will be inspecting all tool kits prior to starting competition this year.

Cake Decorating Project

What does “choice of style” mean for borders?

You can do many different borders styles. Roping, Shells, Pearls... do some searching on the web for some ideas on great cake borders to set you apart from the pack!

Can I bring my own colors?

No, this is food. We have our gel colors.

But I like blue...

Tough nuggets.

How the heck do I level a cake?

Yolanda knows what's up!

Blueberry Muffin Project

Can we use sugar to finish the muffins?

No, but it’s okay. No one else will.

My muffins have been sinking, including the blueberries... what do I do?

You may want to double check that you are creaming on medium to high speed with a paddle attachment using room temperature butter. The mixture of butter and sugar should be light and fluffy. When you rub some of this mixture between your fingers, you should not feel any granules of sugar. When adding eggs, scrape bowl before even adding any, add eggs, scrape, add more eggs, scrape and then proceed to add dry/wet ingredient additions. When adding wet/dry additions, it is best to start with wet and end with wet. Example : Wet addition, dry addition, wet addition, dry addition, wet addition. The technicalities behind this are small but they yield better results.

By adding wet ingredients first you’re preparing the batter to receive the clumpy proteins in flour. If we can more smoothly add the dry ingredients, we can keep all of the beautiful bubbles of air

we've created while creaming. When you bake your muffins this will result in light, bubbly muffins that melt in your mouth. If you practice less care and go with the dump-and-stir method, you will yield muffins that are dense and have a tight crumb. These muffins will linger on the palette as they are chewier and heavier.

Will there be muffin pans?

Yes, we double checked. Everyone will have the same style and manufacture of muffin pans.

Pate a Choux Project

Why even?

Pate a choux is one of the projects included on the national contest schedule. It shows us that you have knowledge in cooked batter. Though now you may be more thoroughly interested in more popular baking options (ahem... cupcakes) I think you'll find with a quick Instagram search that eclairs are the next insane trend. (@maitrechoux... just sayin') Mastering these may seal the deal for you to open America's most popular eclair establishment.

How even?

Martha Knows Best

She's so cool that she mixes it by hand... We're giving you mixers. You're welcome.

Do you have any advice on piping them?

You can use your finger tips, moist with water, to gently press loose ends back into the dough. If you pipe a bad one, you can scrape it back up with a bowl scraper. Some prefer to rest the dough before piping, some believe in resting the piped shapes before baking... for this purpose we are looking for consistency and the instructions being followed properly. This recipe is incredible inexpensive to make, we would practice often.

Can you slice the pate a choux to fill it or should we fill it with a insertion tip?

You may slice and fill or insert to fill. Please do whichever technique you think best represents your work. You will be provided with a whipped topping filling that is great for display and judging purposes. If you love cool whip, it will also be delicious.

If you have any further questions, please email skillsusamdfodservice@gmail.com