

VINESH JOHNY

PASTRY CHEF

101

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Vinesh Johny is the co-founder and Executive Pastry Chef of Lavonne Academy of Baking Science & Pastry Arts, Bangalore. After graduating from culinary school, he went on to work with The Oberoi Group of Hotels and Starwood Hotels & Resorts, in various capacities. Adding sheen to his portfolio is his Diploma in Sugar Art and Wedding Cake decoration at 'Feves de Choco Creation' of Pastry Fine Arts, Malaysia, before he found his calling to be an educator co-founding India's first international specialized baking academy (affiliated to City & Guilds, London), in 2012, at the age of 24, with the aim of making pastry arts a mainstream career choice.

Lavonne brings in pastry chefs of international repute and thereby provides world class education to students wanting to specialize in the field. Known best for his engaging personality and his non-conformity to old-school methods of teaching, Vinesh brings his expertise to the table through the master classes he conducts in addition to heading the academics at Lavonne. Vinesh featured in the inaugural 'Forbes 30 under 30' Asia list for 2016 in the Arts category. Lavonne won the Times Food Award 2016 in the "Best Confectionery" category.

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01

Introduction to Baking

Familiarize yourself with the world of baking, what a career in this field comprises of and more in this first lesson.



Brief Overview

Vinesh Johny is the co-founder and executive pastry Chef at Lavonne Academy of Baking Science and Pastry Arts. He was not good at academics and was insecure about his future. When he was 9, he would help his father with cooking. This help build a keen interest in cooking. However, he was unaware of any programs that could help him become a Pastry Chef. He happened to meet a friend who was pursuing Culinary Arts. Vinesh joined a Culinary School in 2006 and later interned at The Oberoi Bangalore. He learnt about the different cuisines and departments within a kitchen. He was introduced to the world of baking when he had the opportunity to work at the Baking and Confectionery Department. He was intrigued and therefore went back to college to specialize in baking and confectionary.

Conceptualization of Lavonne Academy

He realized that the education and training in baking wasn't good in India. He therefore wanted to start a baking school with his teacher. His teacher was reluctant because of his inexperience. He then went ahead and worked at Starwood Group of hotels at various capacities. However, the idea of starting a pastry school kept coming back to him over and over again. In 2012, he quit his job, talked to his teacher and started India's first internationally recognized pastry school .



Initially, his academy had only 3 students but in the following 5 years, have expanded from a 1500 square feet to a 20,000 square feet school. 1200 students graduate out of his academy every year now. He focuses on delivering pastry education in the most revolutionary way possible. He has introduced some of the finest concepts of baking. The best chefs in the world come and teach at his academy.

Awards & Accolades

In 2016, he was featured in Forbes 30 under 30 Asia List. He was also featured by CNN 20 under 40 list. These are some of the things that helped him grow in the industry. The Pastry Council of India was recently formed and Vinesh happens to be the ex-official Chairman and expert for World Skills, India.



02

Know your dough

In this lesson, you will be introduced to the types of dough that are used in baking and a step-by-step guide to prepare a dough.



Flour

Flour is the most common ingredient used in baking. There are two kinds of flour: non-wheat based flour (rye flour and soy flour) and wheat based flour (whole-wheat flour and all-purpose flour). The all-purpose flour is commonly used in the baking industry because of its protein content. There are two kinds of protein: 'Glutenin' and 'Gliadin'. Both of these proteins combine to form gluten. If you want to make a baguette or something with a chewy texture, you will need flour with high protein content. Else, use flour with a low protein content.

Types of Flour

There are two different types of dough: lean dough and enriched dough. Lean dough lacks butter and egg and are used for making breads that are lighter. Enriched dough has ingredients such as eggs, milk, butter etc. They are used to make panettone, brioche, doughnuts and sandwich loaves.

Working with Yeast

Yeast is a biological agent that releases carbon dioxide in the presence of its food and allows the bread to rise. Once you make the dough, you add all the ingredients (yeast, sugar, water) and start kneading the dough. Gluten is formed in this process and it gives elasticity and strength to the dough. Yeast releases Carbon dioxide at above 32 Degrees Celsius. You have to ensure that the bread has risen enough to get into the oven. It usually becomes double in size and when you touch it, it springs back slowly.



It is a good indicator to know that your bread is ready to be baked. You can add milk wash, bread wash or seeds on the bread before putting it in the oven.

Functions of These Ingredients

Butter and sugar incorporates air at the time of creaming. Butter is a tenderizing agent and adds richness and flavor to the cake. Egg is an emulsifying agent. It combines all these ingredients together. When the cake reaches a certain temperature, the eggs coagulate and add structure to the cake. The cake bakes at a temperature of 90-95 Degrees Celsius. The best way to check whether a cake is baked or not, is to stick a knife into it.

Making the Dough

Add flour, sugar, yeast, butter, water and salt. Use a standing mixer to get the mix. If you do not have the equipment, you can start kneading the dough like one does with chapatis. Kneading may take around 5 to 8 minutes. You need to check if the dough is ready. Take a small piece of the dough, shape it into a small tiny ball and start stretching it from all sides. Once the dough is ready, cut it into pieces for proofing and shaping. Proofing is a process of letting the dough rise. Roll it using your palm while keeping the finger closed. Transfer it to the baking tray. Space them well so as to ensure that there is enough space for the dough to rise. It will take around 20 to 25 minutes for it to rise. For an egg wash, combine equal proportions of milk and egg. Put it in the oven for 10 mins at 220 degrees. Let it cool for 10-15 mins.



03

Baking a cake

Learn about the two-stage method, creaming, foaming and the various functions of the ingredients used.



Creaming & Foaming

Creaming is the most popular method of baking a cake. In this method, you need to cream the butter and sugar using a paddle or hand blender. Add the eggs, one at a time so that the batter does not split. Do not overmix your batter when you are baking a cake. Overmixing the batter can activate the gluten that will result in a chewy and rough texture. The cakes that are baked using the creaming method are denser than cakes obtained through other methods. This technique is employed for making wedding cakes as it requires a lot more structure in the final product. Foaming is used to have a light texture in the cake. Beat up eggs and sugar until it is nice and fluffy and fold the dry ingredients and bake it.

Preparing the Batter

This demonstration by Vinesh Johny employs a two-stage method. In the first step, combine all the dry ingredients. Combine the wet ingredients in the next step. Combine both the ingredients together to make the batter. Mix the chocolate powder and flour. Use a sieve to get rid of lumps in the flour mixture. Use a spatula to get rid of any lump. It aerates the flour and keeps the batter light. Add sugar and baking soda to the mixture. Mix the wet ingredients (milk, vanilla extract, eggs and warm water) with the flour mixture for some time. Pour the batter into the cupcake moulds using a dispenser. Heat it at 160 degrees for 25 minutes.



Making a Ganache

There are different kinds of frosting such as ganache, cheese cream and butter cream. To make ganache, you need to boil a mixture of cream and liquid glucose. The proportion of cream should be same as that of the chocolate. Pour the mixture on the chocolate and allow it to melt. Emulsify the mixture using a hand blender. It will ensure that the chocolate and the cream blend well together. The ganache is thus prepared. Transfer it in another bowl and leave it to set for 5-7 hours at room temperature. You can then use it to frost the cake or pipe out cupcakes.



04

All about chocolate

Learn about the history of chocolate,
the importance of tempering and
the different types of chocolate
in the market.



History of Chocolate

Chocolates have been around for a very long time. It was first cultivated in South America and later grown in different parts of the world. The scientific name for chocolate is *Theobroma Cacao*, which means 'Food of the Gods'. Chocolate has also been used as currency in the ancient days. There are three different types of chocolates, namely, dark chocolate, milk chocolate and white chocolate.

Chocolate is also made up of two different elements: cocoa solids and cocoa butter. The former is the cocoa content whereas the latter is the fat content.

Types of Chocolates

You need to vary the cocoa solids to get your desired chocolate. White chocolate has no cocoa solids, and dark chocolate has the most cocoa solid in it. Chocolate has been one of Vinesh's favorite ingredients ever since he started working in a bakery. Here are a few basic tips and techniques to work with chocolate. There are two different kinds of chocolate in the market: compound chocolate and couverture chocolate. The Couverture Chocolate is the purest form of chocolate. The main difference between Compound and Couverture Chocolate is that the former has vegetable fat whereas the latter has cocoa powder. The cocoa butter is replaced with vegetable fat to bring down the price of the chocolate, increase the shelf life and make it much suitable for a vast range of temperatures.



Tempering of Chocolate

Tempering of chocolate means heating up chocolate to a certain temperature usually about 45 to 50 degrees. The cocoa butter in the chocolate melts completely at this temperature. Then, it is cooled down to 37 degrees and reheated to 31 degrees (dark chocolate) or 30 degrees (milk chocolate) or 29 degrees (white chocolate). The process of tempering is done to ensure that the chocolate is stable and shiny. Moreover, tempered chocolate does not melt at room temperature.

Tabling Method

Melt the dark chocolate to 45 degree Celsius and then cool it down to 27 degrees. In the tabling method, you can use a cold table to cool down the chocolate. This technique is the fastest of all. Pour the chocolate (around 85%) on the table and start sweeping it around to bring down the temperature. Put the cooled chocolate back into the bowl with the remaining chocolate (around 15%). It will raise the temperature of the cool chocolate and will become ready for use. Use a pastry bag to mould your tempered chocolate. According to Vinesh Johny, this is a clean way of pouring chocolate into the moulds. Remove the extra chocolate to create proper shells. After the chocolate is set, fill it with caramel or ganache. To cap it, pour tempered chocolate over the shells. Use an acetate sheet to finish the capping. The sheet is used to make the bottom of the chocolate shell as shiny as the top.



05

Is Vocational Training necessary?

In this lesson, you will learn about the necessity of vocational training, the cost of a pastry program and the career pathway to baking.



Importance of Training

When Vinesh Johny decided to become a Pastry Chef, there were limited options for pursuing a career in baking in India. Today, many pastry schools in the country offer great courses. If you want to become a Pastry Chef, consider taking up a course. The science of baking is extremely complex, and therefore, it is important to research before you join a pastry school. It is easy to follow a recipe and make a cake. However, if you want to bake a cake perfectly, you need to understand the functions of the ingredients.

Cost of a Pastry programme

If you decide to take up a pastry course abroad, it will burn a hole in your pocket. There are cheaper courses available within India that give you similar or better quality of pastry education. A Baking program of 6 to 9 months will cost about 11 to 12 lacs outside India. However, you can pursue a similar course in India for about 4 to 5 lacs. You can have a 9-month diploma in baking. However, there are a few colleges in India that provide a three-year degree program.

Career Pathway

If you complete a nine-month program and spend a lot of time working in hotels, you will gain the necessary experience to become a professional Pastry Chef.

05 Is Vocational Training necessary?



A mere diploma will not certify anyone as a Pastry Chef. Students need to intern at a hotel or standalone restaurant, following the completion of their diploma. They work for 2-3 years at a hotel before they start their own pastry shops. Students who choose not to become entrepreneurs continue working in the hotel and grow along with the organization. Some of them also work on a cruise. This is the typical career pathway for a Pastry Chef in India.



06

Baking Hacks

Vinesh Johny shares some of the important tips, tricks and trade secrets of the baking business through this lesson.





Saving Burnt Cookies

If cookies are burnt at the bottom, then, use a grater and remove the burnt parts. This is an easy hack to fix them. Even though it may not become smooth, yet, it will not taste burnt. It can therefore be perfectly served to your customers.

Fixing the Splitting of Batter

One of the common problems in baking a cake is the splitting of batter. This happens when the eggs are cold. People usually fix it by adding flour to it. This is however not recommended by Vinesh. He emphasizes on using a blow torch to warm up the batter and allowing it to emulsify on its own. At this stage, adding flour will make the batter as good as new.

Leftover Cake Trimmings

Cake pops are in trend and people love to eat them. The best way to use cake trimmings is to mix it up with a frost such as ganache or butter cream. You can make balls out of it and put a lollipop stick into it. Dip it into chocolate and candy melts.

Flash Baking a Bread

The best way to make a bread look fresh is to flash bake it with steam. If the bread is cold, put it in an oven and flash bake it for 2 to 3 minutes at high temperature. It will make the bread look like it is just out of the oven.



Ripening a Banana

If you want to ripen a banana, put it along with its skin in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes. This will ripen the banana and then can be used to prepare banana cakes and other recipes.

Avoid Crystallization of Caramel

If you are trying to make caramel, chances are that it will recrystallize. If you ever see that happening, add citric acid or lemon juice to it.



07

Is baking a viable career option?

Learn about the income of a baker and the various career options in baking.



Career Options

Your pay is likely to be minimal when you are starting out as a baker. Your knowledge and skills should add value to the organization that hires you. You will be hired depending on your level of creativity and expertise. There are different jobs that you can take up in a bakery. As a Pastry Chef, you can handle the entire kitchen. You could become a chocolatier and make chocolates. You can also become a Cake Artist and prepare wedding and customized cakes. You could also become a baker. The above mentioned careers are some areas of specialization.

How much money can you expect?

Initially, when you start working at a hotel, you may get around Rs 15,000 to 20,000 a month. Once you gain experience in the industry, your pay scale will eventually go high. Vinesh has also come across Chefs who make around 4-5 lakhs a month. Vinesh also knows students who went ahead and started their own business. They make around one lac rupees a month

If you want to start a small sized home bakery, then, you will require about 2-3 lacs to set it up. You will need a basic oven, freezer and some of the essential baking tools.



If you want to have a commercial setup, it would cost you around Rs 15 to 20 lacs. You can have a capital investment of up to three to four crores depending on the size of your bakery. You can do great business by creating customized cakes. If you make customized cakes for events, you can have a monthly income of one to two lac rupees. For instance, a wedding cake of 4-5 tiers can cost up to 50-60K rupees.

Start a Home Bakery

Starting a home bakery is a good way to understand the choices of your customers. It will help you decide whether you want to set up a commercial business or not. You can take up a course and learn to handle the commercial aspect of running a business. Usually, a bakery makes Rs. 40,000 – 50,000 per day, provided it has a commercial setup in a prime location. This is the average income of a coffee shop in Bangalore. The amount of money that your bakery can make also depends on your price sensitivity, ingredient quality, and brand perception. You can stay at the top of the baking game by creating innovative products for your customers.



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