How to make eclairs

Ingredients:
1/4 cup water
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup butter (225g)
1 tbs sugar
160g cake flour (although bread flour will also work)
4 large eggs
1/2 tsp salt (you can leave this out if you used salted butter)

For the topping and filling:
100g milk chocolate
250ml cream

Equipment:
a heavy saucepan
a piping bag
an eclair pan (or if you don’t have one, you can use a normal baking tray)

Method:
1. Preheat your oven to 180°C and prepare your pan by buttering it and then lightly coating it in flour so the eclairs don’t burn or stick.
2. Heat the water, milk, butter, sugar and salt in the saucepan until it is boiling rapidly (the mixture MUST be boiling, not just hot).
3. Quickly remove the pan from the heat, and add in the flour all at once. Stir the mixture until a thick paste forms and let this paste cool until it is only slightly hot to the touch, and no longer steaming.
4. Now you can add the eggs. Add them one at a time, mixing well after each one so that the egg is completely absorbed in the paste.
5. When all the eggs have been added, you should have a consistency of dough that can be piped without oozing. Spoon the dough into your pastry bag, and pipe tubes about 10-12cm long. Remember to leave enough space for the eclairs to expand width-ways.
6. Bake the eclairs for 30 minutes. Then quickly take them out of the oven and pierce a hole in each one, returning them to the oven for another 5 minutes. This will release the steam inside and prevent them from becoming soggy.
7. Turn the oven off, but leave the eclairs inside for another 30-60 minutes to dry.
8. In the mean time, clean out your piping bag, and whip the cream.
9. When the eclairs have cooled down, put a small round tip on your piping bag and spoon the whipped cream into it.
10. Insert the piping bag tip into one end of the eclair, and pipe cream into the hollow pastry.
11. When all the eclairs have been filled with cream, you can melt the chocolate either on the stove top or in the microwave.
12. Carefully dip the top of each eclair into the melted chocolate, and briefly leave them in the fridge for the chocolate to set. We hope you enjoy getting better acquainted with this ancient and wonderful pastry.