

● **Convection ovens**, sporting fans that project a lot of heat, excel at quickly baking small items, such as muffins. They're not ideal for large loaves of bread, which require a slower baking time to cook evenly.

● **A blast chiller** quickly freezes cooked pastry items, transforming the liquid in the food to micro-crystals of ice. Micro-crystals don't damage the cellular structure of food like macro-crystals, which develop during a slow freeze in a regular freezer. The result: Items retain moisture, flavor and texture.

● **A 110V induction hob** serves as the only stove at the pastry station. Use it for cooking jams, syrups, custards and more. It uses induction heat, so there's no flame to worry about. And it's portable.

● **Rely on a deck oven** for preparing a variety of menu items, from 2-lb. loaves of bread to pans of peaches with sugar and butter for pie fillings. The interior's stone platform creates a purposefully slow baking process. Take advantage of the independently controlled top and bottom heating elements as well as the steam injection technology.

● **A 20-qt. planetary mixer** is just the right size in that it prepares a good amount of product but can still move on a cart between stations. Make sure the cart has a marine edge to keep the mixer from vibrating off. A 7-qt. counter-top mixer works well for mixing smaller amounts of product.

● **Control the rise of dough with a proofer cabinet**, which provides heat and humidity. This model comes with a timer. Prepare the next-day's croissants, place them in the proofer in refrigeration mode, then at, say, 12 a.m. the timer will trigger the equipment to start the proofing process. The dough is ready to bake at 5 a.m. for the breakfast rush.

● **A batch-bowl food processor** cuts, blends and mixes fast. Making almond paste? This powerful unit will process nuts before they overheat and release their natural oils.

● **Outfit your pastry station with the following supplies (clockwise from top l.):** Disposable icing bags; thermometer/timer; portion-control scoop; food-friendly steel pan; bench scrapers; basting brush; air-brush to apply food coloring; serrated knife for breads; knives; spatulas for decorating and plating desserts; rolling pin; silicone spatulas; whisk; fruit peeler, form rings for sponge cakes; scissors; shaving blade; and a scale for precise weighing of ingredients.

Anatomy Of A Pastry Station

By Allison Rezendes, Fe3, Managing Editor

Established in 1995 by award-winning founders Chef Jacquy Pfeiffer and Chef Sébastien Canonne, MOF, the French Pastry School, Chicago, is the only major culinary school in North America dedicated to pastry, baking, and confectionary arts. FPS has three full-time programs: Pastry and Baking, covering the entire range of expertise; Cake, focusing on celebration cakes and decorating; and Bread, which is a deep dive into artisan bread baking. "The Pastry Arts are very equipment-intense," says Chef Pfeiffer. "They cover pastry, cakes, jams, bread, cookies, chocolate work, candy, sugar sculpture, ice cream and gelato, and more—all of which require very special tools." While you might not need a marble top to work on (butcher block and stainless work surfaces are just fine—and less expensive), you will need climate control for quality results. "Unless you can maintain a room temperature ideally between 67°F-70°F, items won't set up properly," he says. Butterfat, chocolate and fondant melt at 98°F, so you'll have to rethink setting up a pastry station in a 100°F kitchen. *fer*