

Iterative Development of Crème Anglaise-Based Mousse Mini Gâteaux: Structural and Visual Observations

ABSTRACT

Fixed-formula development of crème anglaise-based mousse mini gâteaux was documented through an exploratory applied culinary product development case. Three sequential trial batches (U1, U2, and U3) were produced using a fixed ingredient formula, followed by a separate final production batch. Data sources comprised a study-specific structured observation form containing twelve indicators with four-point anchors, process notes, and photographic documentation. In U1, the raspberry insert was not clearly readable in cross-section when a 3.4 cm insert mould was used within a 7 cm main mould. In U2, the insert mould diameter was increased to 5 cm, and the raspberry insert was recorded as more clearly readable in cross-section, while uneven glaze coverage was also recorded. U3 retained the 5 cm insert mould and introduced a combined finishing procedure comprising a recorded glaze application range of 30–35 °C, a visual flow check, and adjustment of the application amount during glazing. U3 was documented as the selected trial stage, and its procedure was subsequently implemented in a separate final production batch. The final batch record described the product as retaining its form, cutting cleanly, showing readable internal layers, and presenting a neat surface. Production and structured observation across U1–U3 and the final production batch were conducted by the same producer-observer. The findings are presented as case-level observations of the documented production sequence and provide a procedural reference for subsequent testing under comparable production conditions or controlled study designs.

Keywords: *crème anglaise, culinary product development, mini gâteaux, mousse, structured observation.*

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INTRODUCTION

Mini gâteaux are small-format layered pastry products in which construction, layer organisation, surface finish, and handling during production and presentation are relevant aspects of the finished product. Classical pastry texts place these features within disciplined component preparation, assembly, setting, and finishing, while contemporary culinary and food design

studies treat multi-element structure, shape, texture, and visual organisation as deliberate design variables (Gisslen, 2018; Palczak et al., 2020; Xia et al., 2024).

Crème anglaise is a classical custard preparation used as a base for more complex desserts, including mousse-based applications (Gisslen, 2018; Labensky et al., 2018). Experimental studies of compositionally different custard and confectionery-cream systems show that formulation and heating conditions affect rheological behaviour during cooking (Nishida & Watanabe, 2024; Russo Spina et al., 2025). Although these systems differ compositionally from the crème anglaise formula used in the present case, they provide technical context for treating formulation and heating as process-sensitive variables during custard preparation.

Mousse is an aerated food system in which drainage, coalescence, disproportionation, and collapse can affect structural behaviour (Hu & Meng, 2024). Recent work on gelatine-mediated foam behaviour further describes how gelatine can contribute to phase stability and cohesion at air-water interfaces across bakery, dairy, and confectionery applications (Bushra & Ahmad, 2025). In a layered mini gâteau, observation also encompasses the readability of internal components and the final visual arrangement. Chow et al. (2023) treated layer configuration as a manipulable dessert design variable, while Schifferstein et al. (2022) positioned visual and aesthetic properties within culinary practice. These perspectives support the structured observation of layer organisation and final appearance as relevant features of culinary product design.

Previous research has examined mousse products through formulation, texture, stability, and process-related outcomes (Chow et al., 2021; Duquenne et al., 2016; Park & Yoo, 2012). The culinary development literature also describes innovation and recipe development as iterative processes involving testing, adjustment, and refinement (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2013; Westling et al., 2021). Food design research shows that chefs deliberately manage multi-element complexity in product construction (Palczak et al., 2020), and broader contemporary food design literature treats shape, colour, texture, and culinary intention as connected design dimensions (Xia et al., 2024). For finishing, glaze studies using differently formulated coating systems show that rheology, temperature, and composition can influence film-forming behaviour and sagging (Meza et al., 2016, 2021).

Previous studies have addressed mousse stability, layered food design, culinary innovation, recipe development, custard and confectionery-cream rheology, and glaze behaviour through formulation, sensory, instrumental, and broader product development approaches. Within the literature reviewed here, these strands do not directly document a fixed-formula, sequential culinary process adjustment case in which recorded structural and visual observations inform subsequent procedural adjustment. The present study responds to this practice-oriented reporting gap identified within the reviewed literature. It aimed to (1) describe the sequential trial process, (2) document the procedure selected from the study records, and (3) describe the final production procedure together with the observed structural and visual characteristics of the resulting product. The decision pathway was based on structured production observations recorded across the sequential trial stages.

METHOD

An exploratory applied culinary product development case-study design was used, comprising iterative production trials, structured descriptive observation, process documentation, and photographic documentation. Three sequential production batches (U1, U2, and U3) were produced using one fixed ingredient formula. A separate final production batch was subsequently produced using the procedure documented as selected. Production and observation took place in the Practical Kitchen Laboratory of Politeknik Pariwisata Makassar during May–July 2026. The analysis followed the sequential case structure and was conducted descriptively in trial order.

Each of U1, U2, and U3 consisted of one production batch. One additional batch was produced for final production. The study archive reports five mini gâteau units per batch, which constituted the recorded batch output used in the analysis. The batch itself was retained as the unit of analysis for each sequential trial stage. The archive contains batch-level indicator summaries rather than separate indicator series for individual units, and the analysis therefore follows the recorded batch-level structure without reconstructing a unit-level dataset.

The archived study narrative records the selection criterion: a trial stage would be selected when the observation record indicated the highest scale anchor across the twelve study-specific indicators and no residual weakness was recorded in the accompanying process notes. The criterion is therefore reported as part of the archived study documentation used to reconstruct the trial decision sequence.

The recorded numerical entries were used to trace the decision sequence at the indicator level. Results are presented through the documented descriptive pattern, indicator-level records, and accompanying process notes.

Product Formula and Production Conditions

The formula combined a chocolate mousse preparation adapted from Gisslen (2018) with a crème anglaise preparation adapted from Labensky et al. (2018), with ingredient quantities held constant across U1–U3. The documented adjustments concerned the insert mould diameter and the finishing procedure.

Table 1

Fixed Product Formula and Recorded Production Conditions

A. Recipe Identity		
Item	Description	
Product name	Crème Anglaise-Based Mousse Mini Gâteaux	
Product category	Mini gâteaux (individual layered pastry)	
Production basis	Chocolate mousse prepared with crème anglaise as the base.	
Recipe source	Chocolate mousse preparation adapted from Gisslen (2018) and crème anglaise preparation adapted from Labensky et al. (2018). The ingredient formula was held constant across U1–U3; documented procedural adjustments concerned the insert mould diameter and the finishing procedure.	
Recipe status	Adapted and fixed for the present product development trials	
Recorded batch output	Five units per batch.	
Nominal portion target	70 g per unit, used as the recorded production target.	
B. Product Components		
No.	Product component	Function in product
1.	Base component (Chocolate Sponge)	Forms the base layer and provides structural support to the assembled mousse and insert during handling and cutting.
2.	Mousse component (Chocolate Mousse)	Forms the main body of the product as a crème anglaise-based chocolate mousse.

3.	Insert/layer component	Forms the internal raspberry layer observed for readability in cross-section.			
4.	Finish/Glaze Component (Chocolate Glaze)	Forms the outer finish of the product, with surface neatness and final appearance documented during observation.			
C. Ingredient List and Ingredient Quantities					
	Product component	Ingredient	Quantity	Unit	Preparation notes
1.	Base Component (Chocolate Sponge)	Egg yolk	42	g	Room temperature
		Sugar	20	g	For yolk mixture
		Egg white	45	g	Room temperature
		Sugar	31	g	For meringue
		Flour	30	g	Sifted
		Cocoa powder	10	g	Sifted
		Almond powder	10	g	Sifted
		Lemon zest	2	g	Freshly zested
	Fresh cream	10	g	Room temperature	
2.	Mousse Component (Chocolate Mousse)	Egg yolks	75	g	Room temperature
		Sugar	125	g	Divided: half for yolks, half for milk
		Milk	125	mL	Brought to the boil
		Dark chocolate (54% cocoa solids)	62	g	Melted
		Gelatine sheets	3	g	Bloomed in cold water
		Heavy cream (35% fat)	250	mL	Whipped to soft peaks
3.	Insert/Layer Component (Raspberry Insert)	Raspberry purée	188	g	Warmed with sugar to approximately 49 °C
		Sugar	56	g	Warmed with purée to approximately 49 °C
		Gelatine sheets	6	g	Bloomed in cold water
4.	Finish/Glaze Component (Chocolate Glaze)	Gelatine sheets	28	g	Bloomed in cold water
		Cold water	140	mL	For blooming gelatine
		Dark chocolate	71	g	Combine with bloomed gelatine
		Water	285	mL	Combine with sugar, cocoa powder, and cream
		Sugar	510	g	Combine with water, cocoa powder, and cream
		Cocoa powder	156	g	Sifted
		Heavy cream (35% fat)	165	g	Combine with water, sugar, and cocoa powder
D. Methods					
Step	Procedure				
1.	Chocolate sponge Preheat the oven to 180 °C and line the tray with parchment. Whisk the egg yolks and sugar to ribbon stage. Prepare a firm, glossy meringue from the egg whites and sugar. Sift the flour, cocoa powder, and almond powder; combine with the yolk mixture, Spread evenly and bake at 180 °C. Completion was determined by spring-back and the absence of wet batter on a toothpick.				
2.	Chocolate mousse with crème anglaise Whisk the egg yolks with half the sugar. Heat the milk with the remaining sugar, gradually temper the hot milk into the yolk mixture, and cook over a water bath while stirring until the crème anglaise reaches 82–84 °C. Add the melted chocolate. Cool the base to 30–35 °C, then fold in the whipped cream. Use the mousse for assembly in the moulds before freezing the assembled products.				
3.	Raspberry insert Bloom gelatine. Warm raspberry purée and sugar to approximately 49 °C, incorporate the gelatine, mix until homogeneous, transfer to the insert mould, and freeze.				
4.	Chocolate glaze Bloom the gelatine in cold water. Heat the water, sugar, cocoa powder, and cream to just below boiling; pour over the chocolate and gelatine, mix until combined, and strain. For U3 and the final production batch, cool the glaze with occasional stirring to 30–35 °C before application. Check the flow behaviour visually before pouring and adjust the application amount during glazing.				
E. Technical Notes					
	Item	Technical note			
	Temperature control	Crème anglaise target: 82–84 °C, without exceeding 85 °C. Mousse base cooled to 30–35 °C before folding in whipped cream. Glaze application in the selected procedure: 30–35 °C. Temperatures were checked using an instant-read/probe thermometer. The crème anglaise range was used as the recorded culinary cooking target for the production procedure.			
	Freezing condition	Freezing condition: approximately –18 °C for at least 4 h before unmoulding and glazing, as recorded in the study archive.			
	Mould size	Main mould diameter: 7 cm. Raspberry insert mould diameter: 3.4 cm in U1 and 5 cm in U2, U3, and final production.			

Cutting condition	Products were glazed while frozen, then conditioned under refrigeration to approximately 2–4 °C before cross-section cutting. A warm, dry knife was used.
Observation note	Observation focus: shape stability, sliceability, layer definition, and final appearance.

Note. Preparation techniques were adapted from Gisslen (2018) and Labensky et al. (2018).

Observation Procedure and Data Sources

Production and structured observation for all batches were conducted by the same producer-observer. Observations were documented through the study-specific structured form, process notes, and photographic documentation. After each trial, the recorded observations and proposed procedural adjustment were discussed with the two research supervisors to review the technical interpretation of the recorded findings. These discussions did not generate observation scores or modify the batch-level observation record.

The study-specific observation instrument contained twelve indicators organised under four parameters: shape stability, sliceability, layer definition, and final appearance. The instrument was developed for this exploratory case as a structured descriptive decision tool. The four-point anchors provided a consistent framework for recording observations across the trial sequence, and the resulting indicator-level records were interpreted descriptively rather than as interval-level physical measurements.

Table 2

Study-Specific Structured Observation Instrument

Parameter	Indicator	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4
Shape stability	1. Retains shape after unmoulding	Visible collapse or deformation	Noticeable shape change	Minor non-structural change	Shape retained after unmoulding
	2. Sides and surface retain their form during normal handling	Deforms with light contact	Deforms during normal handling	Retains form only with careful handling	Retains form during normal handling
	3. Structure remains intact during movement or plating	Structural failure during movement	Noticeable structural weakening during movement	Structure retained with careful handling	Structure retained during movement or plating
Sliceability	4. Cross-section appears clean	Heavy smearing or tearing	Noticeable smearing	Minor smearing	Clean cross-section
	5. Main form is retained during cutting	Main form collapses	Visible structural damage	Slight non-structural damage	Main form is retained during cutting
	6. Internal structure remains readable after cutting	Not readable	Difficult to read	Mostly readable	Clearly readable
Layer definition	7. Boundaries between layers appear clearly defined	Boundaries not visible	Barely visible	Visible with minor irregularity	Clearly defined boundaries
	8. Components follow the planned arrangement	Disordered or misplaced	Noticeable deviation from the planned arrangement	Minor deviation from the planned arrangement	Matches the planned arrangement
	9. Layers remain visually distinct	Layers merged or blurred	Substantial blurring between layers	Minor edge blurring	Layers visually distinct
Final appearance	10. Overall product appearance is neat	Untidy	Noticeably uneven	Mostly neat with minor flaw	Neat overall appearance
	11. Surface and sides appear clean	Residue or stains visible	Some residue or uneven surface	Minor non-distracting marks	Clean surface and sides
	12. Final presentation is consistent with the specified presentation criteria	Criteria not met	Partly met	Mostly met	Criteria met

Note. The scale anchors were used to support consistent structured descriptive recording across the trial sequence.

Data were analysed descriptively in trial order. Process notes, retained indicator-level summaries in the study record, and photographic documentation were reviewed together to identify the recorded observations at each stage, the procedural adjustment informed by those observations, and the procedure documented as selected. Analysis remained at the indicator and parameter levels and followed the recorded descriptive structure of the case.

The study involved no human participants and included no consumer sensory testing. The study records contain no data from human participants.

RESULTS

Results are presented in sequential order, covering U1–U3, selection of the U3 procedure, and its implementation in the separate final production batch.

Iterative Trial Sequence and Documented Outcomes

The fixed ingredient formula was retained across all three trials. The first documented adjustment concerned the insert mould diameter; the second concerned the combined finishing procedure. Table 3 reports the observations in sequential order to preserve the documented within-case decision pathway.

Table 3

Trial Sequence and Documented Process Outcomes

Trial	Technical condition or change	Documented observation	Record context	Follow-up/status
U1	Fixed ingredient formula; 3.4 cm insert mould used with the 7 cm main mould.	The product was set, unmoulded, and cut with its form retained, while the raspberry insert was recorded as not clearly readable in cross-section.	Insert size in the archived U1 record is represented by the recorded mould diameter.	Insert mould diameter changed to 5 cm for the next trial.
U2	Fixed ingredient formula; insert mould diameter changed from 3.4 to 5 cm.	The raspberry insert was recorded as more clearly readable in cross-section, while uneven glaze coverage was also recorded.	The U2 record documents uneven glaze coverage; the 30–35 °C application range first appears in the U3 procedure.	Finishing procedure revised for U3.
U3	Fixed ingredient formula; 5 cm insert mould retained; glaze application recorded at 30–35 °C with a visual flow check and adjustment of the application amount.	The study record documents that the recorded observations met the selection condition across the four observation parameters and identifies U3 as the selected trial stage.	The temperature range, visual flow check, and adjustment of the application amount were introduced together as one finishing procedure.	Procedure implemented in a separate final production batch.

Note. The table summarises the documented trial sequence, recorded observations, procedural adjustments, and subsequent decisions within the case.

Two changes define the recorded trial sequence. Across U1 and U2, the insert mould diameter changed from 3.4 to 5 cm, and the U2 record described the raspberry insert as more clearly readable in cross-section. Uneven glaze coverage was recorded in U2, while the U3 record documents the revised finishing procedure as meeting the recorded selection condition across the four observation parameters. The 30–35 °C application range first appears in U3 together with a visual flow check and adjustment of the application amount. These controls were introduced together and are therefore reported as a combined finishing revision within the trial sequence.

The U3 procedure was selected for final production. The study records identify a layer readability weakness in U1, uneven glaze coverage in U2, and no residual weakness across the four observation parameters in U3. The selection is documented at the indicator level and in the accompanying process notes as the case decision carried forward to final production.

A separate final production batch was then produced using the U3 procedure, documenting its implementation under the selected production conditions.

Selected Final Production Procedure

The selected procedure retained the fixed ingredient formula and the 5 cm insert mould, while carrying forward the finishing controls documented in U3. Table 4 summarises the production sequence and the recorded operating conditions relevant to interpreting observations from the final production batch.

Table 4

Selected Final Production Procedure and Recorded Operating Conditions

Stage	Key procedure	Recorded condition	Role in the case
1. Preparation	Ingredients weighed according to the fixed ingredient formula and equipment prepared for production.	Formula held constant across trials.	Applies the fixed ingredient formula used across the trial sequence.
2. Sponge and insert	Chocolate sponge baked at 180 °C; raspberry insert prepared separately and frozen.	Final procedure used the 5 cm insert mould.	Forms the base and internal raspberry layer subsequently observed in cross-section.
3. Crème anglaise and mousse	Crème anglaise cooked to the recorded temperature range, chocolate incorporated, and whipped cream folded into the cooled base.	Crème anglaise: 82–84 °C; base cooled to 30–35 °C before folding.	Produces the crème anglaise-based mousse that forms the main body of the product under the recorded production conditions.
4. Assembly	Mousse, frozen raspberry insert, and sponge arranged in the 7 cm main mould.	Raspberry insert formed in a 5 cm mould and assembled within the 7 cm main mould.	Implements the planned layer arrangement for subsequent cross-section observation.
5. Setting and unmoulding	Assembled products frozen until firm, then unmoulded.	Freezing condition: approximately –18 °C for at least 4 h before unmoulding.	This setting stage preceded the handling and glazing observations, with the batch-level record describing the product form as retained after unmoulding.
6. Glazing	Chocolate glaze applied to the frozen mini gâteaux.	Glaze: 30–35 °C; flow behaviour checked visually before application; application amount adjusted during glazing.	This combined finishing procedure was incorporated into final production following its use in U3.
7. Tempering and cutting	Glazed products were conditioned under refrigeration and cut through the centre with a warm, dry knife.	Approximately 2–4 °C before cutting after conditioning under refrigeration.	Provides the central cross-section used for structured observation of sliceability and layer definition.

Note. Temperature values are reported as culinary process targets documented in the study archive.

Observed Structural and Visual Characteristics of the Final Production Batch

A separate final production batch was observed using the same four study parameters. Table 5 presents the batch-level descriptive record for shape stability, sliceability, layer definition, and final appearance.

Table 5

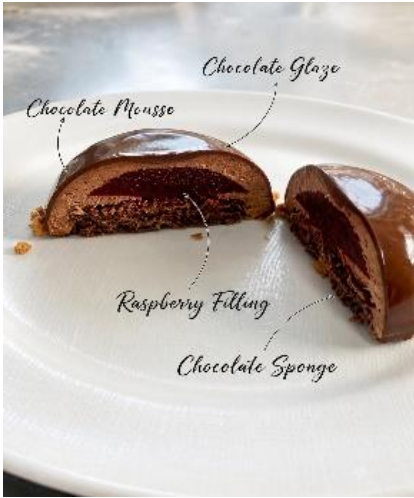
Observed Structural and Visual Characteristics of the Final Production Batch

Parameter	Recorded observation	Observation context
Shape stability	The batch-level record described the product as retaining its intended form after unmoulding and during handling or plating.	Visual and handling observation at batch level.
Sliceability	The batch-level record described the central cross-section as clean, with the main form retained during cutting.	Visual observation of the central cross-section.

Parameter	Recorded observation	Observation context
Layer definition	The batch-level record described the sponge, mousse, and raspberry insert as clearly distinguishable in cross-section.	Visual observation of layer boundaries in cross-section.
Final appearance	The batch-level record described the surface and sides as neat and clean in the final presentation.	Visual observation of the final presentation.

Note. Entries reproduce the batch-level descriptive summary in the study record.

Figure 1
Cross-Section of a Mini Gâteau from the Final Production Batch



Note. Documentary photograph from the final production batch.

Figure 2
Final Presentation from the Final Production Batch



Note. Documentary photograph from the final production batch.

DISCUSSION

The principal interpretation of this case centres on the documented process of procedural development across the trial sequence. The sequence follows the iterative logic described in culinary innovation and recipe development research, in which testing informs subsequent adjustment (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2013; Westling et al., 2021). In this study, that iterative logic was applied within a fixed ingredient formula, with the documented decision path centred on adjustments to selected process conditions.

The U1–U2 change is most directly interpreted at the level of layer readability. Chow et al. (2023) treated layer configuration as a manipulable dessert design variable, Palczak et al. (2020) showed that pastry and culinary chefs deliberately construct multi-element complexity, and Xia et al. (2024) placed shape, colour, texture, and design intention within

contemporary food design. In this context, the U2 record of a more clearly readable raspberry insert in cross-section is relevant as a design and construction observation. The study documents the mould revision and the subsequent cross-sectional observation within the same trial sequence.

The U2–U3 change is best interpreted as a combined finishing revision. Rheological studies of food glazes have linked formulation and flow behaviour to the formation of coating films and have shown that temperature and composition can affect rheological behaviour and sagging in glaze systems (Meza et al., 2016, 2021). Those studies used differently formulated glazes and instrumentally measured rheology and therefore provide technical context for interpreting the recorded U2–U3 finishing sequence. In the present case, the 30–35 °C application range, visual flow check, and adjustment of the application amount were introduced together and are interpreted as one combined procedure.

The mousse and custard stages can likewise be interpreted within their documented production conditions. Hu and Meng (2024) describe drainage, coalescence, disproportionation, and collapse as relevant processes in edible foams, while Bushra and Ahmad (2025) review gelatine-mediated foam stability and cohesion. In compositionally different custard and confectionery-cream systems, Nishida and Watanabe (2024) and Russo Spina et al. (2025) show that formulation and heating conditions affect rheological behaviour. These studies provide technical context for the relevance of temperature, ingredient specification, and handling to mousse production, while Piqueras-Fiszman et al. (2013) distinguish between instrumentally measured physical properties and culinary or sensory observations. In the present study, these process conditions are interpreted through the structured production observations recorded across the trial sequence.

Taken together, the evidence is interpreted at the level of the recorded production sequence. The structured form organises batch-level observations, the photographs document the reported visual condition, and the final production record shows how the selected procedure was carried forward under the same formula and kitchen setting. This evidentiary structure is consistent with the stated exploratory culinary product development case design.

Accordingly, interpretation focuses on the characteristics of the case and the progression of the process recorded across each trial stage. Each stage was represented by a single production batch, with production and observation conducted consistently by the same producer-observer using the study-specific structured instrument. Batch-level indicator summaries, process records, measurement results, and photographic documentation were considered together to trace the production sequence, document changes across trial stages, and explain the basis for selecting the final procedure. Within this design, the findings represent the documented patterns and outcomes of the production sequence.

CONCLUSION

This exploratory applied culinary product development case documented three sequential trials of a fixed formula for crème anglaise-based mousse mini gâteaux. Across the trial sequence, the insert mould diameter was changed from 3.4 to 5 cm, and the raspberry insert was subsequently recorded as more clearly readable within the product cross-section. The combined finishing procedure introduced in U3 was selected for final production and was subsequently implemented in a separate final production batch. At the batch level, the retained record described the product as retaining its form, cutting cleanly, showing readable internal layers, and presenting a neat surface. The contribution of the study lies in its case-specific documentation of iterative procedural adjustment under a fixed ingredient formula and the accompanying structural and visual observations recorded under the reported equipment, kitchen, and production conditions. Within these conditions, the selected procedure provides a documented procedural reference for subsequent testing under comparable production conditions or controlled study designs. The evidential scope of the article is therefore centred on the documented production sequence, the procedural adjustments undertaken within that sequence, and the structural and visual observations recorded at each stage.

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