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This light and airy dessert highlights seasonal fruit freshness

By Susie Iventosch



Individual Pavlovas with Lemon Curd and Raspberry Coulis. Photo Susie Iventosch

The first time I ever had pavlova was when a friend and her Australian husband brought it to a dinner party at our house for dessert. I was blown away by how beautiful it was, with a fluffy cloud-like meringue shell, a layer of custard, and then filled to the brim with fresh fruit. The meringue is crunchy on the outside and fluffy, like marshmallows, on the inside, and the seasonal fruit is so colorful and beautiful. You can make a great big centerpiece pavlova, or individual pavlovas like those in this recipe. In either case, this is a delicious gluten-free dessert.

Pavlovas are usually made with whipped cream in the center, but we thought lemon curd would be delicious instead of whipped cream and we loved the way it turned out. The lemon was such a lovely complement to both the meringue and the fresh fruit. Then, we drizzled a little raspberry coulis over the top of the fruit. Yum!

I like to use a pastry bag and a large open star tip to make my meringue shells, but you can easily just spoon the fluffy meringue onto the parchment paper before baking. Just be sure to make taller edges and a lower inside base, so you can fill it with all of the goodies. (Use a spoon to make the indentation.) Another fun idea is to add dark chocolate chips to your meringue before baking it.

Whether you make a grand statement of one large pavlova, or individual pavlovas, your guests will be wowed by the beauty of this light and airy dessert!

Individual Pavlovas with Lemon Curd and Raspberry Coulis

(Makes 10 individual 3-inch Pavlovas)

1 recipe meringue

1 recipe lemon curd

1 recipe raspberry coulis

4 cups mixed berries (raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, or your choice of fruit)

10 small mint leaves for garnish

Meringue

INGREDIENTS

1 cup pasteurized egg whites, or 8 fresh egg whites

1 1/2 teaspoons cream of tartar

4 tablespoons granulated sugar

DIRECTIONS

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Preheat the oven to 250 F.

Place the egg whites in the bowl of your mixer, along with the cream of tartar. Beat until frothy and foamy. Slowly add sugar, and continue to beat on high until you have very stiff, shiny peaks. You should be able to hold a spoon of the egg whites upside down and they will stay for a minute or so.

Spoon (or pipe) meringue onto the prepared baking sheet in individual servings about 3-4 inches in diameter. Using the back of the spoon, make an indentation in the center to make a bowl shape. If you are using the pastry bag method, make about three or four layers of swirls to form a shell and then pipe more meringue into the bottom of the shell. (See photo above.)

Bake at 250 for 30 minutes and then turn oven off and leave them in for another 30 minutes. Don't open the oven door! The meringue will become crunchy on the outside, but remain soft on the inside. I also love it when the meringue is crunchy throughout as another option. To make them crunchy all the way through, bake them for 45 minutes before turning off the oven and then leave them in the oven for another 30-45 minutes. Serve right away or store in an airtight container in a cool spot for up to a week or so before using. (If you make one large pavlova, increase baking time by about 10 minutes.)

To Assemble Pavlovas

When completely cool, spoon lemon curd in the center of the meringue shells and arrange the fruit on top of that. If you like the idea of the raspberry coulis, drizzle just a little bit over the fruit before serving. Tuck a small mint leaf here and there among all of the fruit as a garnish.

Lemon Curd

INGREDIENTS

2 whole large eggs

2 large egg yolks

2/3 cup granulated sugar

1/3 cup fresh lemon juice

1 teaspoon lemon zest

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

DIRECTIONS

Mix eggs, eggs yolks, sugar, lemon zest, and lemon juice in a small sauce pan. Whisk to blend.

Cook over low heat, stirring often with a wooden spoon or whisk, until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon. This takes anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes, depending upon the heat. Stir in butter until blended.

Remove the curd from the heat and if you have any lumps, (which you probably will), strain through a mesh strainer to remove them. Place plastic wrap directly on top of the strained curd to prevent a skin from forming, and cool to room temperature. Once it reaches room temp, refrigerate until completely chilled, at least 30 minutes. The curd will store for up to a week in the refrigerator at this stage. Just be sure to keep it in an airtight container.

Raspberry Coulis

INGREDIENTS

12 oz. fresh raspberries

1/2 cup granulated sugar

2 tablespoons water

DIRECTIONS

Make a simple syrup by whisking the sugar and water together in a small pot. Bring the mixture to a boil and continue on a low boil until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture is slightly thickened. Remove from heat.

Meanwhile, place rinsed raspberries into the food processor. Pour warm simple syrup over the berries and process until smooth.

Strain the mixture through a mesh sieve to eliminate the seeds, pressing down through the sieve with the back of a spoon. Use a rubber spatula to scrape the strained sauce into the receptacle bowl. The mixture will cool down through the straining process. Pour into a container with a tight-fitting lid and set aside if using soon, or refrigerate until ready to serve. This coulis is delicious on ice cream or frozen yogurt, too!



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Reach the reporter at: suziven@gmail.com

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