Pavlova

// SUBMITTED BY CS1 RICHARD PEDERSEN, USCG

MAKES 12 TO 15 SMALL NESTS (3 TO 5 INCHES) OR 2 LARGE (10 INCHES)

// DIRECTIONS


2. Beat egg whites on high speed until soft peaks form. Then, with the mixer running, gradually add the sugar and salt and beat for 10 minutes or until smooth and glossy stiff peaks form.

3. With a rubber spatula, quickly and gently fold in lemon juice and extract. Fold in cornstarch until well blended.

4. Pipe or spread the meringue as desired. Make a slight indentation/well in the center of each pavlova for the cream. Bake small nests for about 75 minutes and bake large nests for 90 minutes. Turn the oven off without opening the door. Let meringue nests sit in the hot oven for 30 minutes, then remove. Pavlovas should be dry and crisp on the outside, a marshmallow consistency on the inside, and a very pale cream color.

5. Let pavlovas cool completely on a wire rack.

6. Just before serving, beat the cream, sugar, and vanilla bean paste, until medium soft peaks and spread on each pavlova. Top with fruit and other garnishes, as desired.

PRO TIP: For an additional flavor and textural dimension, you can use the leftover yolks to make pastry cream or a curd, then spread a thin layer of it on the meringue before adding the whipped cream and toppings. For example, a passion fruit or lemon curd is fantastic in this dessert. Variation: If you accidentally (or purposely) crush the meringues, gently fold the whipped cream, fruit, and other additions together and layer in parfait glasses. This variation is called Eton Mess.

// ABOUT THE CHEF

CS1 Richard Pedersen joined the Coast Guard Reserves in 2012 and joined the active duty enlisted ranks in 2015. He is currently deployed to the Coast Guard Cutter Elm, homeported in Astoria, Ore.

// INGREDIENTS

PAVLOVAS
6 large egg whites, room temp
1½ cups granulated sugar
2 tsp. cornstarch
1/2 tbsp. lemon juice
1/2 tbsp. vanilla extract
Pinch of salt

CREAM
1½ cups heavy/whipping cream, cold!
2 tbsp. granulated sugar
1 tsp. vanilla bean paste

TOPPINGS
Seasonal berries or sliced/diced fruit
Mint leaves
Chocolate shavings