



Classic Pavlova

Pavlova is a stunning centrepiece for any table and, best of all, can be baked a few days in advance, stored in an airtight container in a cool dark place, and quickly decorated an hour or so before serving. As for what to decorate it with, use any fruit you like, but traditionally, in the words of Stephanie Alexander: "Passionfruits are essential, strawberries are tolerated."

Serves 6-8



INGREDIENTS

- 4 egg whites, at room temperature
- 1 cup castor sugar (220g/7¾oz)
- 2 teaspoons cornflour (6g/¼oz)
- 1 teaspoon white wine vinegar (5ml)
- 400g strawberries (14oz)
- 300ml pouring cream (10oz)
- 2 tablespoons icing sugar (26g/1oz)
- 4 passionfruit

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F).
2. Draw a 20cm (8") circle in the centre of a sheet of baking paper, turn it over and use to line a greased baking tray.
3. Beat egg whites with an electric mixer on medium speed for a few minutes, until soft peaks form.
4. Add castor sugar in 4 batches, each time beating (on medium speed) until it's dissolved before adding more.
5. Increase speed to high and beat for a further 3–5 minutes, until very stiff and glossy.
6. Sprinkle cornflour and vinegar across the top and fold it in.
7. Using a palette knife or spatula, gently mound the mixture inside the circle on the tray. Gently level the top, without pressing too hard, then smooth the sides.
8. Place in oven, reduce heat to 120°C (250°F) and bake for about 75 minutes, until dry to the touch.
9. Turn oven off and leave to completely cool in the oven, with the door slightly ajar.
10. Hull and half or quarter strawberries, depending on size. Set aside.
11. Whisk cream and icing sugar together to form soft peaks.
12. Turn meringue upside down onto a serving platter.
13. Spread cream over the top, decorate with strawberries and passionfruit and serve in wedges.