

RASPBERRY PAVLOVA

4 Size 7 egg whites
250g pure icing sugar or fine castor sugar, sifted
½ teaspoon white vinegar
1 tablespoon cornflour, sifted
1 tablespoon cocoa
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
TOPPING
250 ml cream
2 tablespoons sliced almonds
2 punnets raspberries
chocolate to grate on top



The key I find to making a successful pavlova is having all your ingredients measured out and being able to add them all in without stopping the beater. You need to make the pavlova quite quickly. Here we go...

Preheat your oven to 200°C. Put a little butter or oil on the baking tray then place baking paper on it. This means the paper will stay in one place while you're spooning the pavlova mix on to it and it helps remove the paper from the pavlova at the end too.

Using an electric mixer, beat the egg whites until soft peaks form. Once soft peaks appear, add the sugar a couple of tablespoons at a time beating each addition well. It needs to be a continuous process to trap as much air as possible in the egg whites. You'll see the mixture change texture almost immediately, from loose, soft peaks to a more glossy mixture. It's probably around 45 seconds between each addition of sugar.

Add the vinegar and beat for about 5 seconds. Sift the cornflour and cocoa over the egg white mixture and, using a clean spatula, gently fold in the cornflour – no more than about 8 folds.

Spoon the mix on to the prepared tray and mould it into the shape you want – keep it quite high. Don't mess with the mixture too much, though, as you want to get it in the oven quickly.

Place the tray in the middle of the oven and immediately turn the temperature down to 120°C. Cook for 1½ hours but don't let the pavlova colour. You may see a little sugar syrup seep out of the bottom but the crust should be firm. Inside, it will be soft and marshmallowy.

Turn the oven off and leave the pavlova inside for around 3 hours or even overnight, if you make it in the evening. It will keep in an airtight container at room temperature for two days. Don't refrigerate it.

When you're ready to eat the pavlova, beat the cream till firm and carefully spoon it over the top of the pavlova. Sprinkle almonds over, then raspberries and lastly grate chocolate over the raspberries. Sublime!

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