

Maggie Beer's Pavlova with Dried Apricots and Roasted Almonds



INGREDIENTS

- 4 free range eggs, separated
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 1 tbspn corn flour
- 250g dried apricots
- 1/2 cup Verjuice
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tbspn honey
- 1 sprig rosemary
- 1/2 cup roasted almond flakes
- 1 cup crème fraîche
- 1 cup cream, whipped

METHOD

- Preheat oven to 160°C.
- Place the egg whites in the bowl of an electric mixer with a pinch salt and whisk until soft peaks form. Gradually add the sugar, a third at a time, whisking well, until the mixture is stiff and glossy. Check the sugar is dissolved by rubbing between your fingers.
- Add the cornflour and 1 tablespoon of Verjuice and do a final whisk. You'll know when the meringue is stiff and glossy because the mixture will have tripled in volume and stands up when the beaters are lifted.
- Shape the mixture into a rough circle on a 12cm x 28cm baking tray lined with non-stick baking paper.
- Place the pavlova into the oven and immediately reduce the temperature to 150°C. Bake for 45 minutes, then reduce to 120°C and bake for an additional 45 minutes.
- Turn the oven off and allow the pavlova to cool completely in the oven with the door ajar.
- Place the dried apricots into a microwave proof bowl, pour over 1/2 cup of Verjuice and water and cover with cling film.
- Place into the microwave (1100 watts) for 4 minutes on the defrost setting, this will allow the apricots to reconstitute, plump up and soften. If you have a lower wattage microwave this time will vary.
- Remove from the microwave and strain off the Verjuice liquid, setting aside both the apricots and liquid. Place the Verjuice liquid and honey into a medium fry pan over a medium to low heat and allow to gently simmer for 1 to 2 minutes until it reaches a syrupy consistency.
- Place the reconstituted apricots into the syrup and cook for 3 minutes over a low heat until the apricots are soft. Remove the apricots from the syrup and place into a clean bowl, set aside.
- Add the rosemary to the syrup, turn the heat up slightly to a medium high heat and cook until just short of a caramel, then remove from the heat and pour over the apricots, set aside to cool.
- To prepare the cream topping, place the cream into an electric mixer and whip to soft peaks. Then add the crème fraîche and whip for another 30 seconds. Spoon the cream mixture onto the top of the cooled pavlova and top with the apricots and roasted almonds.