

norma's pavlova

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This recipe is for a large Pavlova, plenty for 10-12 people. It's the size I make when my children and grandchildren come to lunch, if it's a special occasion. And of course, their visits are always special.

A Pavlova always looks spectacular and can be made one or two days in advance giving you time to prepare other dishes, or spend time on yourself.

The Pavlova can be filled and dressed up on the day. It should be crisp on the outside and a little soft inside, not at all like a bought one

INGREDIENTS

SERVES 10-12

Whites of 6 large eggs with a good pinch of salt (I do not use vinegar or corn-flour)

12 oz/350 g caster sugar which has had a vanilla pod stored in it or

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp pure vanilla essence

$1\frac{1}{4}$ pt/725 ml whipped cream

1 lb/450 g soft fruit, a mixture of strawberries and raspberries works well

METHOD

Pre heat the oven to 150c/300f/gas mark 2

Whisk the egg white until they form SOFT peaks, do not over whisk.

Add the sugar 1 tbsp at a time, whisking all the time until you have all the sugar incorporated and the meringue is thick and glossy.

With a large metal spoon spread the meringue on the silicone to form a large circle, one inch deep.

Using a piping bag with a rose nozzle, pipe around the edge of the circle making a rope effect. Do this twice, making a 'wall' for the Pavlova shell.

I always pipe a few extra meringue roses onto another piece of silicone paper just in case the sides of my pavlova collapse

(it has been known). If you have these extra meringues, you can, with a little whipped cream make repairs. And should one side of the pavlova decide to fall a little, then make use of this by making a waterfall.

Trust me, it looks amazing just let the fruit appear to fall out of the meringue shell.

When the pavlova shell is safely piped, put the metal tray into the oven, remember, at no more than 150c/330f/gas mark 2.

Cook in the oven for 1 hour then turn off the heat but let the pavlova remain in the oven until it is cold or if possible overnight.

Keep the pavlova shell dry. A good pavlova should be crisp and dry on the outside and just a little soft and squidgy on the inside (not like bought meringues which are more like polystyrene).

When you are ready, whip the cream with a little icing sugar to taste, pile into the case in layers with the fruit. Finish with a decorative layer of fruit and pipe a few frills if you like. Garnish with a few strawberries with their leaves still on.



You will also need a baking sheet lightly oiled and lined with silicone paper or even better, a sheet of silicone to lay on the baking sheet.

PS. Please remember to take your eggs out of the fridge at least an hour before use!

