

Pavlova

I like to make this when the first local strawberries arrive. Such a simple and delicious way to showcase the sweet summer berries. Even better if I can manage to pick my own at Morrison's berry patch! The custard is optional and can be replaced with a little more sweetened whipped cream under the berries. I did not have to change anything to make this favourite gluten-free!

Meringue:

3 egg whites, preferably room temperature

1/4 tsp cream of tartar

3/4 cups white sugar

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Custard:

1/2 cup white sugar

3 Tbsp corn starch

1/4 tsp salt, or less

2 cups milk

3 egg yolks

2 Tbsp butter or margarine

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Topping:

Strawberries as desired, about 1 1/2 quarts washed and hulled

Sweetened whipped cream

Meringue:

- Whip egg whites and cream of tartar in a clean bowl with clean beaters until soft peaks form.
- Gradually beat in sugar until stiff peaks form then stir in vanilla.
- Spread all of meringue in a circle on parchment*lined baking sheet using a spoon to smooth and indent the centre slightly. I have also made individual meringues using a muffin scoop. This will make about 7- 8 individual forms.
- Bake at 250°F for 45 - 60 minutes until dry and firm. If you are not certain if it is quite done you may shut the oven off and leave it in until it cools

Custard:

- Mix sugar, corn starch and salt until corn starch is evenly distributed to prevent lumps.
- Whisk in milk and microwave on high for 6 - 9 minutes, stopping to stir every 3 minutes
- When mixture has come to a boil and started to thicken add egg yolks putting a bit of the hot mix into the yolks first to temper them.
- Return to microwave and bring back to a boil, about 2 minutes.
- Remove and add butter and vanilla, stirring until smooth.
- Place a piece of waxed paper or plastic wrap on top to keep from forming a skin and let cool..
- Cover baked meringue with cooled custard and berries. Top with a little sweetened whipped cream.

* You may use foil instead but lightly grease it before spreading meringue.