



Gluten Free Strawberry Pavlova

Mmmm. What could taste more like the British summertime than strawberries? Combined with the sweet, satisfying texture of meringue to create a stunning pavlova, they really do create the perfect dessert.

Many bakers are a little reticent about tacking meringue but it's really not that difficult. The trick is to take your time, with beating in the sugar, cooking slowly and steadily and then allowing to cool slowly in the oven to avoid cracking. Go on – give it a go!

Ingredients For Pavlova 4 medium egg whites 200g caster sugar and 1.5tsp vanilla bean paste 1tsp cornflour	For filling 200ml Double cream 1tsp vanilla bean paste 50g caster sugar To decorate 800g strawberries 2tbsp strawberry jam (optional)
---	---

Method

Preheat the oven to 110°C (Fan). Draw a 20cm circle on a baking paper and line a baking sheet with it (pencil side down)

Place the egg whites in a clean bowl and start whisking using an electric whisk. To be sure that your bowl is completely clean, wipe with a little apple cider vinegar. If the bowl has any grease in it at all, your meringue will fail. Whisk the egg whites for a few mins, until it starts to get frothy. Then start to add the sugar. Add a tablespoon of sugar at a time and then whisk for about 20-30sec, before you add the next tablespoon of sugar. Once all the sugar is incorporated, whisk the meringue for a further couple of minutes. Then, mix the vanilla with cornflour and fold it into the meringue. When ready the meringue will be stiff and glossy.

Put about half the meringue in a piping bag and dollop the rest on a baking paper. Flatten the meringue to a circle, just inside the line of the template you drew.

Then pipe with a large star piping nozzle around the disc. Bake in the preheated oven for about a one and half hours, or until it is completely dry. Never take the meringue straight out of the oven as the sudden change in temperature will make it crack. Always leave it in the oven for another hour, leaving the door opened slightly as it cools.

For the filling, whip the cream with vanilla and caster sugar. Slice the strawberries into quarters for decoration. Fill the baked pavlova with the whipped cream and decorate with loads (and I do mean LOADS!) of summer strawberries. If you have some strawberry jam you can use it to glaze the strawberries to give a professional look.