



Light, airy, and blissfully fat-free, meringues balance out the bounty of rich ingredients that take center stage during this baking season. From Christmas cookies to a featherlight top layer of a pie, let the beauty of meringues lift your holiday spirits.

by Stacey Morris | photos: Blaine Moats | food styling: Charles Worthington

3

Mmm...

Meringues

Cherry-Almond Meringue Cookies
{recipe, page 114}



Banana Cream Layered Pavlova

Pavlova is one of Australia's most beloved desserts.

Prep: 40 minutes Stand: 1½ hours Bake: 35 minutes

Chill: 1 hour Oven: 300°F

- 4 egg whites
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1⅓ cups sugar
- 1 cup finely chopped pistachio nuts
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 3 tablespoons butter, softened
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 3 large bananas, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 1 tablespoon lime juice or lemon juice
- ¼ cup chopped pistachio nuts
- Honey

1. Place egg whites in large bowl; let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 300°F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or foil. Draw an 8-inch circle on one sheet of

paper or foil. Draw two 8-inch circles on other sheet of paper or foil, leaving about 1 inch between circles; set aside.

2. For meringue: Add vanilla and cream of tartar to egg whites. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form (tips curl). Gradually add the 1⅓ cups sugar, beating on high speed about 5 minutes or until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight) and sugar is nearly dissolved. Gently fold in the 1 cup pistachio nuts.

3. Spread meringue over circles on paper or foil. Bake on separate oven racks for 35 minutes. Turn off oven; let meringues dry in oven with door closed for 1 hour.

4. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine cream cheese and butter. Beat on medium speed until smooth. Beat in the ⅓ cup sugar. Add whipping cream; beat on low speed until combined, then on medium speed just until soft peaks form (tips curl). Cover and chill until needed.

5. Before assembling, place banana slices in a small bowl. Drizzle with lime juice; toss gently to coat. To assemble, place one meringue on a serving plate. Spread with one-third of the whipped cream mixture. Top with one-third of the banana slices and 1 rounded tablespoon of the pistachio nuts. Repeat layers two more times. Cover loosely and chill for 1 to 2 hours. Before serving, drizzle with honey. Makes 12 servings.



A collection of white meringue cookies shaped like mice, decorated with almond slices for ears, black licorice for tails, and black dots for eyes and noses. They are arranged on a white fabric background.

Cute Li'l Meringue Mice

Delight the kids with these artistic meringue cookies.

Prep: 1 hour Stand: 1½ hours Bake: 5 minutes Oven: 300°F

- 2 egg whites
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup sugar
- Sliced almonds
- 80 3-inch-long pieces black and/or red string licorice
- 1 small tube black decorating gel

1. Place egg whites in a medium bowl. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 300°F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or foil; set aside.

2. For meringue: Add vanilla, cream of tartar, and salt to egg whites. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form (tips curl). Gradually add sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating on high speed until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight) and sugar is nearly dissolved.

3. Transfer meringue to a decorating bag fitted with a 1/2-inch round tip. Pipe teardrop mouse shapes 2 inches apart onto the prepared baking sheets by piping small ovals about 1 inch in diameter, with one pointed end (for the face).

4. Bake all of the meringue mice at the same time on separate oven racks for 5 minutes. Turn off oven; let meringues dry in oven with door closed for 1 hour. Lift meringues off paper or foil. Transfer to wire racks; cool completely.

5. To decorate each mouse, use the tip of a small sharp knife to carefully cut two small slits on top of each head for ears. Insert an almond slice into each slit. Use a toothpick to make a small hole about 1 inch deep in back of each body for tail. Insert a piece of licorice into opening. Add two small dots of decorating gel for eyes and one dot for nose. Makes about 72 meringue mice.

To bring eggs to room temperature quickly, submerge them (in their shells) in a bowl of warm tap water for 5 to 10 minutes.

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Chocolate Meringue Pie

Three contrasting textures—crisp pastry, creamy-thick filling and cloud-like meringue—form one dazzling dessert.

Prep: 50 minutes Stand: 30 minutes Bake: 80 minutes
Cool: 2 hours Chill: 3 hours Oven: 450°F/300°F/275°F

Baked Deep-Dish Pastry Shell

- 9 egg whites
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 3 cups milk
- 4 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 5 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1¼ cups powdered sugar
- ¾ teaspoon cream of tartar

1. Prepare Baked Deep-Dish Pastry Shell. Reduce oven temperature to 300°F. Meanwhile, place egg whites in a large bowl. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

2. For filling: In a medium saucepan, stir together granulated sugar and cornstarch. Stir in milk and chocolate. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Gradually stir about 1 cup of the hot mixture into egg yolks. Return egg yolk mixture to saucepan. Bring just to boiling; reduce heat. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in butter and vanilla. Cover and keep hot.

3. For meringue: Beat egg whites with an electric mixer on low speed until foamy. Add 1 tablespoon of the powdered sugar and cream of tartar; beat until combined. Gradually add the remaining powdered sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating on high speed about 8 minutes or until stiff, glossy peaks form (tips stand straight).

4. Pour hot filling into pastry shell. Immediately spread meringue over hot filling, carefully sealing to edge of pastry to prevent meringue from shrinking. Using a small spoon, swirl meringue to create large peaks.

5. Bake for 30 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 275°F. Bake about 50 minutes more or until meringue is golden brown and set when gently shaken.

6. Cool on a wire rack for 2 hours. Chill for 3 to 6 hours before serving; cover for longer storage. Makes 10 servings.

mounds of MERINGUE

Basically, meringue is a mixture of stiffly beaten egg whites and sugar, but here are three types used in different ways.

●●● Italian (soft)—This stable meringue is made by adding hot sugar syrup (as opposed to granulated sugar) at 240°F to 250°F to whipped egg whites, giving them a glossy texture that's perfect for cake frosting.

●●● Swiss (hardest)—Also a cooked meringue, cookielike Swiss meringues are baked for a long time at a low temperature to dry them out. In addition to being used as cookies, these meringues make excellent shells and dessert bases.

●●● French (semihard)—Light, mousselike, and most often used on tops of pies and other desserts, this meringue is baked for a short time in order to give the meringue a golden brown crust.



Baked Deep-Dish Pastry Shell: Preheat oven to 450°F.

In a medium bowl, stir together 1¾ cups all-purpose flour and ½ teaspoon salt. Using a pastry blender, cut in ½ cup shortening until pieces are pea size. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon cold water over part of flour mixture; toss gently with a fork. Push to side of bowl. Repeat with additional cold water, 1 tablespoon at a time (5 to 7 tablespoons total), until all is moistened. Shape into a ball.

On a lightly floured surface, use your hands to slightly flatten dough. Roll dough from center to edge into a 14-inch circle. Wrap pastry circle around rolling pin; transfer to a 9½- to 10-inch deep-dish pie plate. Ease pastry into pie plate without stretching it. Trim pastry to ½ inch beyond edge of pie plate. Fold under extra pastry. Crimp edge as desired. Line pastry with a double thickness of foil. Bake for 8 minutes. Remove foil. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes more or until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack.

To remove a pesky spot of egg yolk from separated egg whites, use a clean eggshell to scoop it out. It will attract the yolk like a magnet.

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Meringue-Topped Raspberry Cupcakes

Prep: 25 minutes Bake: 23 minutes Cool: 5 minutes Oven: 350°F

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup butter, softened
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 egg yolks
- 3 tablespoons raspberry liqueur or raspberry juice blend
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla
- ½ cup milk
- 4 egg whites
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ⅔ cup sugar
- 12 raspberries (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line twelve 2½-inch muffin cups with paper bake cups or lightly coat muffin cups with nonstick spray for baking; set pan aside.

2. In a small bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, and salt; set aside. In a large bowl, beat butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add the ¾ cup sugar. Beat on medium to high speed for 1 minute. Add egg, egg yolks, raspberry liqueur, and vanilla; beat until combined. Alternately add flour mixture and milk to butter mixture, beating on low speed after each addition just until combined.

3. Spoon batter into the prepared muffin cups, filling each about three-fourths full. Bake for 15 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, wash beaters thoroughly. For meringue: In a medium bowl, combine egg whites and cream of tartar. Beat on medium speed until soft peaks form (tips curl). Gradually add the ⅔ cup sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating on high speed until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight).

5. Pipe or spoon meringue on top of cupcakes. If desired, place a raspberry on top of each cupcake, pressing into meringue. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes more or until meringue is lightly browned.

6. Cool cupcakes in pan on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Remove from pan; cool slightly. Serve warm (or cover loosely and chill for up to 4 hours before serving). Makes 12 cupcakes.





Meringue Snowflakes

Prep: 25 minutes Stand: 1½ hours Bake: 10 minutes Oven: 300°F

- 2 egg whites
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- Dash salt
- ½ cup superfine sugar
- White or light blue decorating sugar

1. Place egg whites in a medium bowl. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 300°F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or foil. Draw six 3½-inch circles on each sheet of paper or foil; set aside.

2. For meringue: Add cream of tartar and salt to egg whites. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form (tips curl). Gradually add the ½ cup superfine sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating on high speed until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight) and sugar is nearly dissolved.

3. Transfer meringue to a decorating bag fitted with a ¾-inch round tip. Pipe snowflake shapes on top of circles on paper or foil. Sprinkle with the decorating sugar.

4. Bake all of the meringues at the same time on separate oven racks for 10 minutes. Turn off oven; let meringues dry in oven with door closed for 1 hour. Lift meringues off paper or foil. Transfer to wire racks; cool completely. Makes 12 meringue snowflakes.



To crush peppermint candies, place unwrapped candies in a resealable plastic bag and pound lightly with a meat mallet.

1 ± 9

Chocolate Peppermint Meringue Kisses

Prep: 1 hour Stand: 1½ hours Bake: 7 minutes Oven: 300°F

- 4 egg whites
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cider vinegar
- ¼ teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1⅓ cups sugar
- 1 cup milk chocolate pieces
- 1 teaspoon shortening
- 1¼ cups (50) crushed striped round peppermint candies

1. Place egg whites in a large bowl. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 300°F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or foil; set aside.

2. For meringue: Add salt, vinegar, and peppermint extract to egg whites. Beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until soft peaks form (tips curl). Gradually add sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, beating on high speed until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight) and sugar is nearly dissolved.

3. Transfer meringue to a decorating bag fitted with a ½-inch star tip. Pipe 1-inch kisses 1 inch apart onto the prepared baking sheets. Bake kisses on separate oven racks for 7 minutes. Turn off oven; let kisses dry in oven with door closed for 1 hour. Transfer kisses to wire racks; cool completely.

4. In a small saucepan, combine chocolate pieces and shortening. Cook and stir over low heat just until melted. Remove from heat. Spread crushed candy in shallow dish. Dip bottoms of meringues in chocolate, then in crushed candies. Place on waxed paper; let stand until chocolate is set. Makes 192 meringue kisses.

continued on page 114