

Salt and Serenity

Rhubarb Raspberry Pistachio Pavlova

Serves 8-10

I decided to pair the rhubarb with raspberries, instead of the common pairing of strawberries. Raspberries add additional tartness which is perfect for balancing the sweetness of the meringue.

This recipe calls for superfine sugar. It dissolves much faster than regular sugar and will give you a smoother meringue. If you can't find any, just place regular granulated sugar in the food processor and process it for about 45 seconds. Add a few tablespoons more than you need for the recipe as some sugar will stick to the blade and sides of the machine. Weigh or measure sugar again after processing.

Recipe for the pavlova shell is adapted from Zoe Francoise. Rhubarb curd recipe is my creation. You can make the pavlova shell, rhubarb curd and roasted rhubarb topping the day before you plan to serve this. Assemble 1-3 hours before you plan to serve and chill in fridge.

Pavlova shell:

150 g egg whites - about 5 egg whites, at room temperature
1 pinch of kosher salt
1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
250g (1 1/4 cups) superfine sugar (see note above if you can't find superfine sugar)
1 teaspoon vinegar (white wine, cider or distilled)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon cornstarch

Rhubarb Curd:

150 grams (1 1/2 cups) chopped rhubarb
56 grams (1/4 cup) water
56 grams (4 large) egg yolks
132 grams (2/3 cup) granulated sugar
1/8 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt
85 grams (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter, room temperature

Roasted Rhubarb:

400 grams rhubarb (about 6-8 stalks, depending on thickness), cut on diagonal into 2-inch-long pieces
56 grams (1/4 cup) water
148 grams (3/4 cup) granulated sugar
1/8 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt

Assembly:

170 grams (2 cups) fresh raspberries
340 grams (1 1/2 cups) heavy (whipping) cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
30 grams (1/4 cup) toasted, chopped pistachios

Powdered sugar

1. **Make pavlova shell:** Preheat oven to 250°F. Trace a 7-inch circle on a piece of parchment and set it on a rimmed baking sheet, pencil side down, so you don't get lead in your meringue.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer, fitted with whisk attachment, whip the egg whites, cream of tartar and salt together, on medium speed, until medium peaks form. To test your peak, remove the whisk attachment and hold it upright. Soft peaks will flop over. Medium peaks will stand up but not completely straight. Stiff peaks stand straight upright.
3. Turn mixer speed to low and slowly, spoon in the sugar. It should take you about 5 minutes to add all the sugar. Be patient. Once all the sugar is added, turn up the speed to high and whip until stiff peaks form. Add the vanilla and vinegar. Put cornstarch in a sieve and sift over top of meringue. Fold in the cornstarch, vanilla, and vinegar.
4. Mound the meringue into the circle on the parchment. Use a metal spatula to smooth top and sides into a dome shape. Create ridges along the perimeter of the dome with the metal spatula. Imagine a ballerina's tutu. Use a spoon to form a slight crater at the top of the dome. Watch the video on my blog.
5. Bake for 60 minutes or until the meringue starts to turn a very pale tan color, then reduce the heat to 225°F and continue to bake for 45 minutes. Turn off the oven (don't open the door), turn on the light in the oven and leave the meringue in oven until completely cool. This will take several hours, but it can be stored like this overnight.
6. The center of the pavlova will collapse, that's just the nature of the beast and where you will put your filling. The outer edge may crack a touch too, but I've made this shape several times and it generally only cracks a little if you do not open the oven door. The inside should be soft, but not at all wet.
7. **Make rhubarb curd:** Puree rhubarb and water in food processor until smooth, about 2-3 minutes. Pour pureed rhubarb into a bowl lined with cheesecloth. Tighten the cheesecloth and squeeze out the juice with your hands. You will get about $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup. You only need $\frac{1}{3}$ cup, so discard any extra as well as the pulp.
8. In a double boiler or a stainless-steel medium bowl set on top of a medium heavy-bottomed pot with 2 inches of simmering water, combine the rhubarb juice, sugar, egg yolks, and salt. Stir constantly, with a silicone whisk, making sure to scrape the bottom and sides, while the

liquid thickens and reaches a temperature of 175°F on an instant read thermometer. This will take about 20-25 minutes. (I will admit, I was not stirring constantly. I did walk away for several minutes at a time, and it still turned out fine. Just make sure the water is simmering and not boiling.) Remove from heat and whisk in butter until dissolved.

9. Strain the curd through a fine mesh sieve. (I thought this step was totally unnecessary until I strained mine and discovered a few bits of scrambled egg in my curd. Probably because I walked away and did not whisk constantly!) Cover surface of curd with plastic wrap and chill for several hours, until thickened.
10. **Roast rhubarb:** Preheat oven to 400°F. In a Pyrex 9x13 baking dish, combine water, sugar, and salt. Arrange rhubarb pieces in dish in a single layer. Roast for 7 minutes. Spoon juices over the rhubarb. Roast for a further 5 minutes, just until the rhubarb is tender. Using a spatula, carefully transfer rhubarb pieces to a baking sheet. Pour any juices into a small container and reserve for assembly.
11. **Assemble pavlova:** In the bowl of a stand mixer, fitted with the whisk attachment, whip cream with vanilla extract on medium speed. High speed creates a less stable cream. Whip to soft peaks. Set aside.
12. Transfer cooled pavlova to cake stand or serving plate. Take a very sharp paring knife and gently open the pavlova. Go around the seam that has formed on top to remove thin top layer of meringue. You will see a hollow crater inside. This is correct.
13. Transfer rhubarb curd to a disposable piping bag and carefully pipe curd into the hollow crater. Top curd with half the roasted rhubarb and half the fresh raspberries. Top fruit with whipped cream, creating decorative swirls with the back of a spoon. Arrange remaining rhubarb and raspberries on the top of the cream. Chill for at least 1 hour, or up to 3 hours. Sprinkle with chopped pistachios and sift icing sugar over top just before serving.