

Vanilla Poached Rhubarb Pavlova with Candied Almonds

Makes 8 pavlovas

INGREDIENTS

Pavlova:

5 large egg whites
1 pinch of salt
250 grams caster sugar
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp white wine vinegar

Poached Rhubarb:

1lb fresh rhubarb trimmed and cut into 3" batons
½ cup granulated sugar
½ cup water
1 split vanilla bean pod, or 1 tbsp of vanilla paste
1 lemon, zested and juiced
pinch kosher salt

Spiced Chantilly Cream:

1 cup 35% cream
1 tbsp icing sugar
½ tsp ground black pepper
½ tsp ground cardamom

Candied Almonds:

¼ cup almonds
3 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp water
2 tsp corn syrup

METHOD

For the Pavlova:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Whisk the egg whites with salt until they're holding firm peaks but are not stiff. Gently add in the sugar, spoonful after spoonful, still beating until mixture looks thick and glossy. Sprinkle the cornstarch, vanilla and the vinegar on top and fold in with a spatula to combine.

Draw 4inch circles on parchment-lined sheets. Spoon the meringue onto the baking parchment into the delineated circles and spread and smooth to fill. You want to make the meringue slightly higher at the rims, so it holds the cream and fruit later. You may also use a piping bag to create a nest-like shape. Place trays in the oven, turn it down to 300°F, and bake for 30 minutes. Turn the oven off and leave the trays in for another 30 minutes, with the oven door ajar. Take out of the oven to cool completely before assembling the pavlovas.

For the Poached Rhubarb:

In a medium saucepan, stir together sugar, water, vanilla bean, lemon juice and zest, and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring until sugar has dissolved. Add rhubarb. Reduce heat; partially cover, and simmer until rhubarb is just tender and beginning to break down, about 7-10 minutes. Remove from heat.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer rhubarb to a bowl. Let rhubarb and poaching liquid cool completely. Remove vanilla bean from poaching liquid.

For the Chantilly Cream:

Add all ingredients to a large bowl and whip by hand with a whisk or with an electric mixer until medium peaks form. Refrigerate until ready to use.

For the Almonds:

In a small pot, combined the sugar, water, and corn syrup. Over medium heat, bring the mixture to a boil and cook until a deep amber colour is reached. Immediately add the almonds, stir to coat.

Pour the mixture on a silicone lined baking sheet and spread to a single layer. Chop the cooled candy into a coarse crumb.