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## **Strawberry Pavlova**

*Serves about 6 - 8*

This classic dessert remains a favorite because of its dramatic presentation, ease of preparation, and delicious celebration of seasonal berries. Named for the famed Russian ballerina of the early 20th century, Anna Pavlova, the ethereal nature of her performance is mirrored in the airy, ephemeral character of the meringue base. Presented with three layers – the meringue, whipped cream, and berries -- much of this dessert may be prepared ahead of time, then freshly assembled just before serving. Choose this Strawberry Pavlova to be one of your signature desserts.

### ***Meringue Ingredients:***

5 large eggs, whites only  
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar  
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
1/2 teaspoon almond extract  
Pinch of salt  
3/4 cup sugar

### ***Whipped Cream Ingredients:***

2 cups heavy cream  
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
3 tablespoons powdered sugar

### ***Strawberry Sauce:***

1 cup chopped strawberries  
1/8 cup sugar

### ***Macerated Strawberries:***

2 quarts strawberries, hulled and sliced  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
5-6 fresh mint leaves, chiffonade cut for garnish

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**Make the Meringue:**

- (1) Preheat the oven to 200°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
- (2) In a stand mixer using a whisk attachment, use a spotlessly clean metal or glass mixing bowl. Beat the egg whites on medium until broken up and displaying a foamy appearance. Add the cream of tartar and continue beating, now on high speed, until the egg whites reach the soft peak stage. Add the vanilla extract, almond extract, and salt.
- (3) Continue beating the egg whites; sprinkle the sugar on top with the mixer running. The sugar will gradually dissolve as the egg whites reach the stiff peak stage.
- (4) Dollop the meringue in the center of the lined baking sheet. Spread evenly into a 12-inch circle leaving a slightly higher edge to form a rim on the meringue circle.
- (5) Bake in the oven for 1-1/2 hours or until the outside of the meringue begins to crust and crisp. Turn off the oven; allow the meringue to continue to dry out in the oven for 1 hour.

**Make the Whipped Cream:**

- (6) In a stand mixer using the whisk attachment, combine the cold cream, vanilla, and powdered sugar. Beat until the sugar dissolves and until stiff peaks form. Do not over beat. Cover and keep refrigerated until ready to assemble the pavlova.

**Prepare the Strawberry Sauce:**

- (7) In a small saucepan, cook 1 cup of sliced strawberries with 1/8 cup sugar over medium heat for 8-10 minutes. Gently mash the berries as they cook. Once the sauce is cooked, let cool and set aside until ready to assemble the pavlova.

**Macerate the Strawberries:**

- (8) Near serving time, hull the strawberries and cut into slices. In a large bowl, combine the sugar, and lemon juice. Pour over the berries and gently toss to coat. Set aside to macerate.

**Assemble the Pavlova:**

- (9) Just before serving, with all four components ready, transfer the baked and dried meringue to a large serving platter. Spread the whipped cream evenly on top of the meringue, leaving an edge of the outer ring of the meringue showing under the cream. Spoon the strawberry sauce on top of the whipped cream. Top the sauce with the macerated strawberries, mounding generously. Garnish with fresh mint. Serve at the table by cutting into wedges. Enjoy immediately!