

# pavlova with lemon curd & passion fruit

I cannot count the number of pavlovas I've made in my life, but it must be close to 100. It's just such a stunning way to end a festive lunch or dinner and the toppings can be changed seasonally. The easiest way to serve it is with seasonal fruit and whipped cream. But since you're using six egg whites for the meringue, you might as well make a silky lemon curd with the yolks. With added fresh passion fruit, this is the stuff summer dreams are made of.

serves 8

6 extra large egg whites (save the yolks and make \*lemon curd)  
400 g caster sugar (extra fine sugar)  
10 ml (2 teaspoons) white vinegar or lemon juice  
15 ml (1 tablespoon) corn flour  
5 ml (1 teaspoon) vanilla extract (or scraped seeds of a vanilla pod)  
250 ml fresh cream, whipped  
about 1 cup \*lemon curd, for topping (see page 188)  
pulp of about 4 fresh passion fruits

Pre-heat the oven to 150 °C. Whisk the egg whites in a large bowl (with an electric whisk or stand mixer with whisk attachment) until soft peaks form. Gradually add the caster sugar to the egg whites, small amounts at a time, whisking constantly until the mixture is stiff and glossy. Add the vinegar/lemon juice, corn flour and vanilla extract and mix well.

Dot a big roasting tray with some of the mixture then place a sheet of baking paper on top (sticking like glue). Pour the pavlova mixture onto the tray and shape with a spoon or spatula into a round shape with a diameter of about 230 cm, like a cake (draw a circle on the back of your baking paper, if necessary). The mixture will rise a bit around the sides, so leave enough space. Place in the oven and immediately turn down the temperature to 120 °C. Bake for an hour and 15 minutes, then turn the oven off and leave to cool (in the oven) for about 2½ hours without opening the oven door.

To serve: Carefully remove the baking paper from the bottom of pavlova and transfer to a serving dish (it will have a few cracks, that's 100%). Top with whipped cream and lemon curd, swirling the cream and curd together softly. Top with lashings of passion fruit pulp and serve at once, sliced.

Note: Pavlova must be assembled just before serving as it becomes soggy on standing. Store the unassembled baked pavlova on the baking tray covered with a sealed large plastic bag. Can be baked a day ahead if stored in an airtight container.

