

SOUTH AFRICAN PAVLOVA

There is a constant argument whether the pavlova originated in Australia or New Zealand. Well, let's just say that the charred pavlova, celebrating the braai, is a South African thing. A pavlova is so sweet, and by charring (nicer word for burning) the edges, you get a delicious smoky flavour that balances beautifully – just like you get with grilled fruit.

SERVES: 6-8

4 peaches, halved, stones removed
½ ripe pineapple, peeled and cut into wedges
250ml sour cream
250ml thickened cream
2 tbsp castor sugar
pomegranate seeds to scatter (optional)
150g almonds, roasted and chopped
¼ cup honey

PAVLOVA BASE

6 egg whites (from XL eggs)
1½ cups (330g) castor sugar
2 tsp cornflour
1 tsp white vinegar

Preheat the oven to 160°C on the fan setting. Line a baking tray with baking paper.

Place the egg whites and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer and whisk for 12 minutes or until thick, glossy and sugar dissolves. If you don't have a stand mixer, use hand beaters but add the sugar gradually once the egg whites form soft peaks. Keep beating for a few minutes until the sugar is completely dissolved and the meringue is very thick. Whisk in the cornflour and vinegar until combined.

Spoon mixture into the centre of the paper and form into a rectangular shape, but don't play around too much, an obscure shape is perfect.

Place in oven and immediately reduce oven to 100°C. Bake for 1 hour 20 minutes or until outside is crisp and dry. Turn off oven and leave meringue in oven for at least 4 hours or until cooled completely. I like to do this overnight.

For the fruit, brush the cut sides of the fruit with a little oil then grill on a hot chargrill or braai. If your chargrill sticks, you can also grill the cut sides of the peaches in a non-stick pan. Set aside to cool completely.

For the filling, combine the sour cream, thickened cream and sugar with a pinch of salt in a bowl and whisk until thickened.

Burn the cooled pavlova meringue with a blow torch. Don't be shy here, let the edges start to get nice and charred. You can obviously skip this step for a regular pavlova. Cool then top with the cream mixture. Scatter over cooled fruit and nuts along with the pomegranate. Drizzle with honey.

Tip: To make sure the baking paper doesn't move on your tray, spray the underside with a little oil spray.





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