

Decadent Homemade Tiramisu

Written by Rebecca Auclair
Sunday, 15 May 2011 00:00

This past Christmas Eve, I had a dessert disaster turned adventure.

I should have known better, really. I should have listened to that voice inside of me. It could have been the Fermentation Goddess, but this is generally not her area of expertise. It said, "Don't try making a dessert you have never made for a bunch of people who don't already know that you are a good cook." Since I couldn't resist the lure of the Peppermint Chocolate Mousse, I decided to risk it. "What could be so hard?" I thought. Simple ingredients, simple directions, and sha-zam, yummy dessert on the way.

Not this time. I was having trouble incorporating the room temp ganache into the whipped cream, and I got a little too enthusiastic with the electric mixer. I had this same problem once when I was a kid, trying to make whipped cream for a dessert topping. Instead, I made butter. Oops! It was delicious, sweet cream butter which we had on crackers instead of ice cream. Yet, I digress.

The short version of the Peppermint Chocolate Mousse disaster is that I ended up making delicious Peppermint Chocolate Butter by over-beating the mouse. Not one to waste organic cream, chocolate and mint extract, I turned this dessert mistake into delicious Chocolate Peppermint Truffles. This creativity problem-solving still left me without a dessert to bring to Christmas Eve dinner. Please feel free to [contact me](#) if you are interested in learning more about these accidental truffles.

Like all moments in life, here was an opportunity for me to use ingredients that I had on hand to make a yummy dessert. I really wanted to make tiramisu all along, but I was having trouble finding recipes that did not call for alcohol. I also did not have marscapone cheese lying around, but I thought I might be able to use strained yogurt as a substitution.

I really lucked out. I not only found a recipe for homemade ladyfingers on [foodnetwork.com](#), but I also found a tiramisu recipe that called for cream cheese and was alcohol free.

Below are the links to the two original recipes, and my modifications come after the links.

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[Homemade Ladyfingers](#)

[Alcohol-Free Tiramisu](#)

Making the ladyfingers

Honestly, if I had planned better, I would have bought ladyfingers to save myself the time, but I was glad to learn how to make them and they were really yummy. Mine were flatter than store-bought ones, but with all the moisture in the tiramisu, they puffed and softened up and were never mushy.

Ingredients for approximately 14 ounces of ladyfingers

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 1/4 cup sifted white flour
- 6 egg yolks
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 6 egg whites, beaten until stiff
- Pinch of salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease and flour 3 baking sheets with 3 tablespoons butter and approximately 3 tablespoons flour (or grease and parchment line). If using flour, mark parallel lines in the flour across the width of the tray about 4 inches apart. If using parchment paper, you'll have to eyeball it or pre-plan and mark the butter before you apply the paper. Put egg yolks, vanilla and sugar in a large mixing bowl, and with an electric mixer fitted with a wire whisk, beat on medium-high speed until the mixture is pale yellow, thick, and has tripled in volume, or for about 8 minutes.* Add the beaten egg whites, flour, and salt, and fold into the egg yolk mixture with a rubber spatula until smooth. Pour into a large pastry bag with a 3/4 inch plain tube. Pipe fingers about 4 1/2 inches in length on to the baking sheet, using the lines as a guide. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes or until just firm on the outside and soft in the center. Cool on pans briefly and then remove to cooling racks to finish.

*I found this step very confusing. It was difficult for me to judge when the mixture had tripled in volume, and I can't decide if I over or under mixed the egg yolks, thus creating my flat-ish lady fingers. I wondered about adding a pinch of cream of tartar to the egg whites in order to help

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support the loft, and I will try that next time.

Assembling the Tiramisu

Ingredients for tiramisu in a 9x9 pan, serving 10-15 people

- 1 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup sugar, divided
- 16 ounces or two cups yogurt cheese,* [see The Yogurt Diary, Chapter 4: Straining Yogurt](#)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 14 ounces ladyfingers
- 1 cup strong coffee (I used 1/2 cup decaf espresso with 1/2 cup water)
- 1 teaspoon cocoa powder

*I need about 6 or 7 cups of regular yogurt to make about 16 ounces of yogurt cheese. I recommend straining one quart of yogurt first to help you determine how much yogurt you will need to make enough yogurt cheese.

Directions

In a chilled bowl, combine 3/4 cup heavy cream and 2 tablespoons sugar or more, to taste. Whip with an electric mixer fitted with a whisk until soft peaks form. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

In a large bowl combine the yogurt cheese, 1/2 cup heavy cream, vanilla and remaining sugar. Whip with an electric mixer fitted with a whisk until light and fluffy.

Quickly dip ladyfingers into coffee, one at a time, and line the bottom of 9x9 pan with them. Put half of the yogurt cheese mixture over the ladyfinger layer and spread it with a rubber spatula until it is smooth and even. Place another layer of coffee-dipped ladyfingers on top of the yogurt cheese layer and spread the remaining strained yogurt mixture on top of those ladyfingers. Top this layer with another layer of coffee-dipped ladyfingers, and then spread the sweetened whipped cream on top of them. Dust the top with cocoa and refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.

Delicious, beautiful, and decadent. Enjoy!

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