

Meringues with Mastic & Tropical Fruit

Ashuplados kon almastica

This meringue, chewy with Greek mastic, has a soft pillowy centre. It makes a magnificent, elegant, gluten-free dessert. I love piling high over the whipped cream a combination of seasonal tropical fresh fruit including mangoes, papaya and pineapple chunks, then drizzling over it a passion fruit pulp (or as we call it in Zimbabwe granadilla), drizzled with a syrupy topping.

8 egg whites

400g (14oz) caster (superfine) sugar

2 crystals mastic, crushed with 1 tsp sugar 1 tsp vanilla extract

For the topping:

2 cups heavy cream

1 tsp vanilla extract

mango, papaya and pineapple chunks

For the passion fruit syrup:

1 cup caster sugar

1/2 cup water

1 cup passion fruit pulp (about 12 scooped out passion fruit)

Preheat the oven to 120°C (250°F). Line a baking tray with baking paper, sticking it firmly on the tray with a little meringue.

Put the egg whites in a clean bowl of a free-standing electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment and beat until the whites double in volume and hold a slightly bent peak when you lift the whisk. Add half the sugar, a tablespoon at a time, incorporating each tablespoon completely before adding the next one. Tip in the remaining sugar and whisk until the whites are stiff and glossy. Fold in the ground mastic and vanilla extract with a metal spoon.

Reduce the oven temperature to 110°C (225°F).

With a metal spoon scoop large spoonfuls of the meringue mixture and gently dollop the meringue in the centre of the prepared baking tray. With a rubber spatula create a heaped shape. Bake for about 3 hours. Turn off the oven and allow the meringue to cool completely in the oven overnight.

When ready to assemble whip the cream into soft peaks with the vanilla extract and dollop on top of the meringue. Scatter the fruit chunks over the cream and meringue.

Make the syrup: Place the sugar, water and passion fruit pulp in a small pan over a medium-high heat and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Bring to a boil. Then reduce the heat and simmer for 8-10 minutes or until syrupy. Drizzle over the warm syrup just before serving.