

Low FODMAP Cornmeal Dusted Meringues with Fruity Dessert Salsa and Vanilla Custard

LOW FODMAP GLUTEN-FREE DAIRY-FREE IBS FRIENDLY

Cloud-like meringues topped with fresh fruit and lime salsa, plated on creamy smooth custard – this delicate dessert is not only a delicious treat, but a light-as-air finale to any meal. The added touch of dusting the meringues with cornmeal before baking adds to the crisp, toasty exterior, and hint of sweet maize (corn) to this southwest confection.

It's best to plate these just before you are ready to serve, as the bottoms of the meringues will get soggy if assembled too early. The custard and salsa can be made a day in advance when covered and chilled in the fridge. The meringues can be made a day in advance and stored overnight in an airtight baggie or container, but I find that the consistency becomes a bit chewy.

The meringues require 45 minutes baking plus 1 1/2 hours in the closed oven with heat off, so plan accordingly.

Makes: 4 meringues: 2 per person

INGREDIENTS

MERINGUE INGREDIENTS

3 egg whites from small to medium size eggs, at room temperature
2 tablespoons (24 g) sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract (essence)
1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch; use gluten-free if you are following a gluten-free diet
tiniest pinch of salt
1 teaspoon low FODMAP medium grind whole grain yellow cornmeal (I use Bob's Red Mill Organic)

CUSTARD INGREDIENTS

1 small to medium egg
2 tablespoons (24 g) sugar
tiniest pinch of salt
2 teaspoons cornstarch; use gluten-free if you are following a gluten-free diet
1 cup (240 ml) plain, unsweetened almond milk (I use Blue Diamond Almond Breeze Original)
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract (essence)

SALSA INGREDIENTS

2 medium (30 g) ripe strawberries, hulled and small diced
1/2 small kiwi, peeled and small diced
2 tablespoons pineapple, small diced

Juice of 1/8 lime
1/4 teaspoon sugar

METHOD

Preheat oven to 275 F / 140 C

Line a small, rimmed sheet pan with parchment paper. Evenly coat the paper with cooking oil spray.

Meringues: Using a hand mixer (my stand mixer is too large for this small amount of meringue), beat the egg whites in a medium-sized mixing bowl on low speed at first, then increase to high speed until they form soft peaks. On high speed, slowly sprinkle in the sugar. Add the vanilla, beat for 30 seconds. Sprinkle in the cornstarch and salt. Beat for 1 minute. Test that the meringue forms a stiff peak when held upright with the beaters. You want a shaving cream consistency that holds its shape.

You can pipe the meringues with a pastry bag, however, I prefer the random, rustic look of using a spoon to drop and shape them onto the parchment in 2 1/2-inch (6 cm) diameter rounds, spacing them 2-inches (5 cm) apart. Try to get them as poofy high as you can, as they will deflate a bit during baking. Use the spoon to press a small well into the tops. This is to hold the salsa and some of the custard.

Once all 4 rounds are in place, dust the tops with cornmeal.

Bake for 45 minutes. Turn off the oven and leave them in the closed oven for 1 1/2 hours as they dry and become crisp on the outside and fluffy smooth on the inside.

Salsa: Mix the salsa ingredients in a small bowl, cover with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator.

Custard: Whisk the egg, sugar and salt in a medium-sized stainless steel mixing bowl. Add the cornstarch and 1/2 of the almond milk. Whisk until the cornstarch is dissolved. Whisk in the remaining milk.

Pour 1-inch (2.5 cm) water into a small saucepan. Bring the water to a low boil over medium heat, then reduce to low. Place the bowl of custard mixture over the pan. It should fit snugly into the pan; the water should not touch the bottom of the pan. Hold the bowl in place using an oven mitt, as it will become quite hot. Continually whisk the custard until thickened, being careful not to let it boil. This will take approx. 5 to 8 minutes. When the custard nicely coats the back of a spoon, it's ready. Remove from heat and whisk in the vanilla. Use a spatula to pour the hot custard into a small bowl. Let cool for 10 minutes, cover with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator.

Assembly: The meringues should be completely cooled, and the custard and salsa should be chilled. Just before you're ready to serve, gather everything together, plus 2

dessert plates. Spoon 3/4 of the custard, divided, onto the plates. Smooth it out into a circle or oval. Place 2 meringues on each plate over the custard. Spoon the remaining custard into the top wells of the meringues, allowing some to drip over the sides. Spoon even amounts of salsa to top them all. Serve immediately.

TIPS

Tablespoons are US Standard / Imperial 3 teaspoons each

A Dutch oven may be used for the custard

Garnish option: sprinkle the tops with a bit of lime zest



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