I adore beautiful food! I have been very fortunate to have a career as a food stylist/cooking demonstrator I get to spend my time just making lovely food. On a recent trip to Paris on our way back from Sacre’-Coeur (a breathtaking old church with the best view of the city), we saw this gorgeous patisserie called “Meringues” they had beautiful Mini Pavlovas in their windows. My daughter and I bought a few different types; they were probably the best sweet thing I had ever eaten. Here is my take on how to recreate them.

Mini Pavlovas with Vanilla Pastry Cream

Makes 25 – 3 inches

4 large egg whites at room temperature

220 grams or 1 ¼ cup Castor sugar

1 teaspoon cream of tartar

1 teaspoon butter/vanilla extract

2 teaspoons cornstarch

Parchment paper

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Separate the egg whites from the yolks, reserve the yolks for the pastry cream. Place the egg whites in a clean bowl free from any grease residue whatsoever. Using a hand or stand mixer begin mixing the egg whites till frothy add the cream of tartar.

Increase the speed of the mixer to high and add the sugar one tablespoon at a time. Continue mixing till stiff peaks are achieved, approximately 7-8 minutes with my stand mixer. The egg whites should stand stiff without being grainy. If you put meringue between your fingers you should not feel any graininess.

Whisk the corn starch into the vanilla extract. Using a whisk, fold this into the stiff meringues.

Draw 3-inch circles on the bottom of your parchment paper to use as guides.

Put meringue into pastry bag and pipe onto parchment.

Place in the center rack in the oven and bake for 60 minutes then turn off oven and let rest in the oven for another 30 minutes. The meringues will feel firm to the touch.

Remove from the oven and let cool on a rack.

Vanilla Pastry Cream

½ vanilla bean split lengthwise

2 cups whole milk

6 large egg yolks

2/3 cup of sugar

¼ cup cornstarch

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

Split the vanilla bean and scrape out its seeds and place all in a medium saucepan of the milk.

Heat the milk on medium until it comes to a boil. Remove from the heat and let rest for 15 minutes.

In a bowl, mix the egg yolks and the sugar until the yolks become a pale yellow color.

Whisk in the cornstarch making sure there are no lumps.

Add ¼ cup of the hot milk mixture and mix well.

Slowly drizzle in the remaining hot milk.

Using a sieve, strain this mixture back into the saucepan.

Place the saucepan over medium-high heat and whisking continuously until thickened and slowly boiling.

Remove the saucepan from the heat and whisk in the butter.

Let the custard cool for 10 minutes then pour into a blow.

Cover bowl with plastic wrap and make sure the wrap is touching the surface of the custard.

Refrigerate for 2 hours before serving.

Whipped Cream

1 cup heavy whipping cream

2 tablespoons of sugar

1 teaspoon of vanilla extract

Place a medium mixing bowl into the freezer with the whisk, let it chill for 10 minutes.

Add the cream to the bowl and begin whisking, slowly add in the sugar and whisk till cream reaches stiff peaks. Whisk in the vanilla and chill till ready to serve.