

Ricotta Mousse with Candied Fruit and Farro

Time: 30 minutes active time plus 4 hours to chill the mousse

This mousse is an easy riff on the magnificent Neapolitan Easter pie called *pastiera di grana*, a ricotta cheesecake dappled with candied fruit and farro and baked in a sweet pastry crust. If you have no candied fruit (and like not having any), currants make a decent substitute. We add very little sugar to this recipe but cloak the mousse before serving with a shimmering caramel syrup. The combination of lush, neutral cream, with its tart piquant fruits and plump farro berries, offset by dark, smoky caramel, is ethereal.

Equipment Mise en Place

For the mousse recipe you will need a food processor, a small bowl, an electric mixer with a whisk attachment, a balloon whisk, a double-boiler rig or a bowl that fits snugly over a medium saucepan, a large bowl, 2 quarts of ice cubes, and a rubber spatula.

For the caramel recipe you will need a scrupulously clean, heavy 2-quart saucepan, a wooden spoon, and a heatproof glass measuring cup.

Ingredients

For the mousse:

- 1 cup (8 ounces) whole milk ricotta
- 3/4 cup (6 ounces) chilled heavy cream
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated gelatin
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cold water
- 1/3 cup diced candied citron, orange peel, or lemon peel, or 1/4 cup currants
- 1/3 cup cooked farro from Perfect Basic Farro recipe
- 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon peel
- Pinch ground cinnamon (optional)
- 1 large egg
- 2 large egg yolks
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- Pinch fine sea salt

For the caramel:

1 cup (7 ounces) granulated sugar

1/4 cup hot water

For the garnish:

2 tablespoons chopped raw pistachios (optional)

Directions

- 1. For the mousse:** Turn the ricotta into a food processor bowl and process until smooth. Set aside. Soften the gelatin in 1 1/2 teaspoons cold water in a small bowl and set aside. With an electric mixer, beat the heavy cream and vanilla until soft peaks form; refrigerate until ready to use. Toss the candied fruit or currants, farro, lemon peel, and cinnamon (if using) together in a small bowl and set aside.
- 2.** Whisk the egg, egg yolks, and sugar together in the top of a double boiler or a bowl set over a saucepan containing 1 inch of simmering water (the bowl should fit snugly). Whisk until the egg mass is fluffy and warm and the whisk leaves a trail, about 3 minutes. Remove the insert or bowl from the heat, whisk in the softened gelatin, and stir to dissolve. Whisk in the ricotta. Place the insert or bowl in a large bowl filled with ice water and whisk until the mousse is cold and beginning to set, 2 minutes. Fold the whipped cream into the mousse with a rubber spatula, turning occasionally, until the mousse sets enough to hold the farro aloft, 5 minutes. Fold in the farro mixture. Turn the mousse into a shallow container and cover it, or pipe or spoon it into 6 glasses. Chill 4 hours.
- 3. For the caramel:** Pour the sugar into a clean, heavy 2-quart saucepan and set over low heat. Cook, without stirring, until the sugar pools amber on the edges of the saucepan, 5 to 7 minutes. Maintaining low heat, stir the caramel with a wooden spoon until the sugar has melted completely and the caramel is a rich warm amber throughout. Remove the pan from the heat. Add half the hot water and stir to dissolve. Add the remaining hot water and stir. Transfer the caramel to a heatproof glass measuring cup (there should be 2/3 cup) and cool at room temperature. When it is cool, the caramel should be viscous but still liquid. If it is too thick, thin it with a few drops of water.
- 4. To serve:** Drizzle a scant 2 tablespoons caramel onto the center of 6 dessert plates. Using a hot spoon, scoop 2 quenelles (rounded spoonfuls) of mousse onto each plate. Sprinkle with pistachios. For glasses, drizzle caramel over each portion and sprinkle with pistachios.

Serves 6