

CRG Meringues Schalen (Swiss Meringue Nests)
(also known as Mini Pavolova)

Yield (approx 40 x 2" nests)

Egg Whites	1 pound (whites from 16 large eggs)
Salt	¼ teaspoon
Sugar	4 cups
Corn Starch	2 Tablespoons + 2 teaspoons
White Vinegar	1 Tablespoon
Vanilla	2 teaspoons

- Do not make this on a rainy or humid day. Save this project for a nice dry day. Meringues are easy to make ahead and when properly dried, can be stored in a single layer in a plastic container with a tight lid. The container should be kept at room temperature in a cooler spot in your kitchen. The meringues will keep for 2-4 weeks depending on the humidity of your kitchen.

Method:

1. In a small bowl, hand whisk the sugar and cornstarch until well combined
2. In a very clean mixer bowl, beat the egg whites and salt with a whisk attachment on high speed (3) until the mixture starts to become white and no longer foamy.
3. Reduce the mixer to medium speed (2) and gently add the sugar/cornstarch mixture while the mixer is going.
4. Increase the mixer back to high speed (3) and continue whipping.
5. Add the vinegar and vanilla into the whites while the mixer is going.
6. Beat until the whites have very stiff, glossy peaks. Test by turning the mixer off and jabbing your finger into the whites and pulling your finger straight out quickly. You should have a small blob of mixture hanging like a little icicle. Flip your finger over so the icicle is now facing the ceiling. If the whites are not stiff enough, the tip of the icicle will droop over slightly (a French pastry chef I met said when the peaks are too soft, it droops like "a little beak on a bird"). For this recipe, the little icicle should not droop at all and stay pointing straight to the ceiling.
7. Place a piece of baking parchment paper or silpat on a sheet pan. Do not use pan spray.
8. With a pastry bag and star tip, pipe a small round circle about the size of a half dollar or larger if you prefer larger nests. Continue piping around the edge of the circle 1 or 2 times so that you form a little nest.
9. Continue piping nests working quickly. Toward the bottom of the bowl, your mixture will begin to lose some of its stiffness. If the whites start looking soupy or too loose when

you pipe them, stop. Discard the deflated whites. Eventually, with practice, you will become quick enough to pipe all the batter into nests before it softens. But in the beginning, prepare to lose some of the mixture and let that be okay.

10. Place the nests in a pre-heated oven at 200 degrees. You are not really baking, you are drying the nests out for a long time on low heat. If you set the oven too hot, the nests will not look nice and white when dried. Depending on the weather, the nests can take anywhere from 2-4 hours to dry. Just leave them in the oven and check every hour by picking one of the nests up. As it dries, it will feel nice and light. If you gently press your thumb into the bottom of the nest and make a small indentation, it should be dry in the center. If it resembles marshmallow in the center, then they are not dry enough (although my children think they are delicious when they are softer in the middle, you will not be able to store them for future use unless they are dried all the way through).
11. When serving the desserts, you can fill the center with fresh fruit and whipped cream... or chocolate mousse and fresh fruit... or fruit filling ... or ice cream and chocolate sauce the way the Swiss do!