

Semifreddo w. Nuts & Dried Fruit

(about 10 servings)

Ingredients:

1/3 cup shelled, unpeeled Hazelnuts
1/3 cup blanched Almond slivers
1/3 cup dried Cherries or Cranberries
1/3 cup dried Apricots, chopped
½ cup chopped Semisweet Chocolate (¼-½" pieces plus broken residue from chopping).
4 extra large Eggs
¼ lb granulated Sugar
1 tbsp Grappa (I prefer to use Triple Sec or Grand Marnier)
1 cup Heavy Cream
Powdered sugar
Pinch of tartar

A pan that can hold the mixture for 26 people and fits in the freezer.
Wax paper

Directions:

Preheat oven to 300°.
Spread the hazelnuts on a baking sheet and roast them for 10 to 15 minutes.
Transfer them to a medium-size wire strainer and rub them against the sides of the strainer to remove as much of the peel as will slip off. Another approach is to place them on ½ of a dish towel, fold the towel over and roll them in the folded towel on a counter top. You cannot get all of the peel off of all of the pieces. Use them anyway.
Chop the peeled hazelnuts into very coarse pieces, like about ¼ size.
Spread the blanched almonds slivers on a baking sheet and bake them in the 300° oven until they are lightly toasted.
Separate the eggs, putting the whites in a bowl where you will later beat them, and the yolks in a separate bowl.
Care must be taken not to get any yolk in the whites or they will not beat to a meringue.
Add the sugar to the yolks and beat it in.
Add the fruit, chocolate pieces and nuts to the egg yolk mixture and mix it all together.
Whip the cream and sweeten it slightly with powdered sugar.
Add a pinch of tartar to the egg whites; beat them until they form stiff peaks.
Sweeten it lightly with powdered sugar, and then fold the whipped cream, the meringue and the fruit-nut mixture together.
I find that the easiest way to do the mixing is by using one hand.
Line the pan with wax paper, then pour or spoon the mixture in it.
Cover and freeze it overnight.
To serve the semifreddo, cut in half, then quarters, then eights.
It tends to soften quickly, so have the garnish ready.

Garnish:

Mix two to three tbsp of marmalade with just enough of one of the liqueurs above to thin it out a bit.
In a food processor mix that mixture with a small box of fresh raspberries.
Spoon a dollop of that mixture on each serving of semifreddo and top that with one mint leaf.

Cut into 26 pieces, garnish the top and serve immediately.