



Raspberry Port Trifle By Piper Davis

Trifle is a dessert that begs for the cook's personal touch. Feel free to improvise, embellish, and generally take artistic license with this recipe. Use frozen or home-canned fruit in the



Photo credit: John Valls © 2009

winter months, fresh fruit and berries in the summer, or whatever you happen to have on hand. The liquor is up to you too: sherry, brandy, Marsala, bourbon, kirsch--whatever complements the fruit you're using. There's a recipe for my Granny Piper's Sponge Cake in the book, but any plain cake, white or yellow, will do. Trifle made with Glazed Vanilla Bundt Cake (also in the book) is out of this world. Eat half of the cake and save the rest for trifle.

I have a weakness for trifle bowls--the tall, straight sides make for perfect and visually stunning layers. If you're going to make trifles, I heartily encourage you to invest in one.

Serves 10 to 12 generously

Crème Anglaise

2 cups (16 fluid ounces) whole milk
1/3 cup (2.25 ounces) granulated sugar
4 egg yolks
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Layers

2 pounds leftover plain cake
4 cups fresh or frozen raspberries
1 cup raspberry jam
3/4 cup (6 fluid ounces) port

Whipped Cream

2 cups (16 fluid ounces) heavy whipping cream
2 tablespoons granulated or confectioners' sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Fresh raspberries, for garnish (optional)

Lightly toasted almonds or fresh fruit, for garnish (optional)

**Make the custard.**

Heat the milk in a heavy saucepan over medium heat until a skin begins to form on its surface, just before it comes to a simmer. Meanwhile, whisk the egg yolks with the sugar, the vanilla, and the salt until well blended and slightly thickened. While whisking continuously, slowly pour about 1 cup of the hot milk into egg yolk mixture. Then, still whisking continuously, slowly pour the egg yolk mixture back into the saucepan with the remaining hot milk.

Cook the custard over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon or heatproof spatula until the custard thickens slightly and coats the back of the spoon; this will take about 10 minutes. (If you run your finger down the spoon, the custard shouldn't run into the track.) Immediately remove the custard from the heat and pour it through a fine-mesh sieve into a 2-quart bowl. Cover with plastic wrap, placing it directly on the surface so the custard doesn't form a skin. Let the custard cool to room temperature.

Assemble the trifle.

Slice the cake into 1/2- to 3/4-inch-thick pieces. Arrange one-third of the slices on the bottom of the trifle bowl, pressing the cake to fill the bottom. Pour 1/4 cup of the port evenly over the cake, then spread 1/3 cup of the jam over the cake. Cover with a layer of raspberries, using about 1 1/3 cups, then pour 3/4 cup of the custard over berries. Repeat the entire process two more times. Cover the surface of the trifle with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 24 hours and up to 2 days.

Garnish and serve.

Well in advance of serving, put the whipping cream in a bowl in the refrigerator, along with a whisk. When you're ready to serve the trifle, whip the cream with the sugar and vanilla until it holds soft peaks, about 5 to 7 minutes. Pile the whipped cream atop the trifle and garnish with the fresh fruit and toasted nuts.

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