

Cristina's tiramisú

...Did you know that the name "tirami su" literally means "pick me up"? It seems to have originated in Northern Italy near Treviso in the 800s... but whatever its origins, we love it today!



Mamma Gabriella often made tiramisú at home, and I have always enjoyed this dessert, each spoonful perfectly balancing the richness of the mascarpone sauce and the coffee-soaked sponge fingers. I adapted mum's recipe to recreate this well-loved Italian favourite, much to my delight – and that of many international friends.

Result? Perfection! Even better than my mum's version – scusa mamma! Every bite takes me home to my family in Italy, where food gathers people, stories and emotions around the table.

Hope this truly Italian recipe satisfies your tastebuds and your guests. And maybe, just like Italian people, you'll end up saying: "Mamma mia, che buono!" 😊

Ingredients for 8 good portions

- ☐ 300 ml real espresso coffee from a caffettiera or espresso machine. Must be cold or room temperature (soluble coffee is not suitable).
- ☐ 4 medium or large eggs
- ☐ 500 gr. Mascarpone (2 x 250g tubs)
- ☐ 150 Caster/Golden Sugar
- ☐ 350-400 gr. (= 2/3 packets) Sponge Fingers
- ☐ 1 shot glass of Brandy (or other alcohol of choice, optional)
- ☐ 10 gr. cocoa powder for dusting before serving



Containers and tools

For the preparation:

- ☐ 2 large bowls
- ☐ 1 flat container/plate long enough to dip sponge fingers into coffee, at least 1 cm deep
- ☐ 1 handheld electric mixer
- ☐ Kitchen scale
- ☐ Spatula (optional, to lick sauce off the bowl)

For the tiramisú layering:

- ☐ A square or rectangular glass/ceramic tray (25x25 or 25x30) around 8-10 cm deep

Method

Sauce preparation

- Prepare the espresso coffee at least a couple of hours before you plan to make the tiramisú. Set aside to cool down to room temperature or in the fridge.
- Separate egg whites from yolks.
- Whip the yolks with the sugar.
- Add all the mascarpone and mix well until creamy and there are no lumps.
> **Optional:** *add the brandy/alcohol*
- Whip the egg whites separately until firm (with a pinch of salt)
> **Tip:** *to see if they're done, tilt the bowl slightly: if the egg whites slide down, they need more whipping until they don't move anymore.*
- Add the egg whites to the mascarpone sauce slowly, to avoid breaking the eggs; this will ensure the cream is fluffier. When the cream is smooth with no lumps, it's ready.

Layering the tiramisú

- One by one, dip each sponge finger in the coffee for about 1-2 seconds on each side. After a few fingers, you'll need to replenish the coffee, but keep it to a max of 1 cm deep.
> **Tip:** *if either the coffee is warm, or the sponge fingers are dipped too long, the biscuits will be soggy and the tiramisú too runny. I've been there...*
- Place each finger side by side making a compact layer at the bottom of your container. (They should look like sleeping bags, on a cold camping night). If there are spaces at the side, try and cut biscuits to fill the gaps so the balance cream-biscuits is maintained throughout. You should have a flat layer of sponge fingers.
- Add a few spoons of mascarpone sauce to cover the biscuits completely – the layer should be about 1 cm deep, or a similar height to the biscuits for a good proportion. This should use nearly half of your sauce.
- Layer another layer of coffee-soaked sponge fingers following the above steps, making sure you place the sponge fingers gently without pushing them down into the cream, until a full layer of sponge fingers covers the sauce.
- Cover the sponge fingers with a last layer of mascarpone sauce, get any bubbles out as per last tip. If you have leftover sauce, you can make individual portions using mini pots or glasses until you use up all the ingredients.
- Cover the tray with stretched cling film and avoid touching the creamy top.
- Place in the fridge for at least 3 hours to let it set (it's even better the day after).

Finishing touch

When ready to serve, dust the top of your tiramisú with cocoa powder. You can cover the cream completely, lightly sprinkle the cocoa or have shapes like in the photo. Just don't sprinkle the cocoa before it's time to serve, as it will get wet and give the impression it's not fresh.

Cut the tiramisú in square or rectangular blocks (the dimension is up to you!) with a knife, and lift using a palette - not a spoon - to give that typical restaurant look. Serve and enjoy 😊

