

Savarin with White Peaches

For the Savarin

8.75 oz. flour
.2 oz. instant or .3 oz. dry yeast
½ cup water
3 eggs
1½ tablespoons sugar
1¼ teaspoons salt
5 tablespoons butter

For the Syrup, Filling, and Glaze

3 cups water
1½ cup sugar
¾ cup peach schnapps or brandy
½ cup apricot jam
4 candied cherries
3 large peaches
Sugar to taste
½ lemon
1 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla

For the Savarin

Sift the flour into the bowl of a stand mixer equipped with a dough hook. Dissolve the yeast in 3 tablespoons of warm water. Make a well in the flour, pour in the yeast, and mix with your finger.

Add 1 egg and start the mixer on medium-low speed. Begin pushing the flour with a spatula into the center of the bowl. When well mixed, add the remaining 2 eggs one at a time, continually pushing the flour toward the center. Gradually add 2 more tablespoons of warm water continuing to beat until the dough is smooth. If it's not yet smooth you may need to add a bit more warm water.

Remove the bowl from the mixer, dust the top with a little flour, cover with a damp kitchen towel, and let the dough rise in a warm place for 1-2 hours until it doubles in size.

Mix the sugar and salt with 1 tablespoon of warm water. Return the bowl to the mixer and add the dissolved salt and sugar.

Turn the mixer up to medium-high speed to knead the dough for 15-20 minutes. The dough is done when it gathers around the hook and begins to clean away from the sides of the bowl. It's possible that you may need to add a bit of extra flour if the dough is too soft.

Turn the mixer down to medium-low and add the remaining amount of water. The amount of water may require some adjustment. You should end up with a very soft, sticky dough at this point.

On a piece of wax paper, smear the room-temperature butter with the heel of your hand. Take ⅓ of the dough from the mixer, place it on the counter, and spread the softened butter over it. Fold over the dough and continue to mix with the heel of your hand until well combined and smooth.

Return this to the remaining dough in the mixer and mix at high speed until the dough is completely smooth and homogenous.

Butter a ring mold very well to prevent sticking, and pour the dough into the mold, smoothing it out as much as possible.

Let the dough rise uncovered in a warm place until the dough reaches the top of the pan, 1-2 hours. Place a heavy baking sheet on the middle rack of the oven and preheat to 400°. Insert a cylinder of aluminum foil in the hole of the pan to help the sides rise evenly.

Place the pan in the oven on the baking sheet, and reduce the temperature to 375°. Bake for about 25 minutes until the top is browned and firm to the touch. Remove from the oven and let stand 5 minutes. Place the rack over the mold and reverse. If possible, let the savarin sit for a day uncovered to make it less fragile and better able to absorb the syrup.

The Syrup

Place 1½ cups of sugar in 3 cups of water, and bring to the boil, stirring until the sugar is completely dissolved. Remove from the heat and cool to lukewarm, then stir in the chosen liqueur or mixture of liqueurs. Prick the puffed side of the savarin with a cake tester or toothpick to help absorb the syrup.

Place the savarin puffed side down in a deep pan with a rack in the bottom. Pour the syrup over the savarin, and allow it to stand for ½ hour, basting it frequently with the syrup. Grabbing the savarin by the rack, reverse it onto a plate or another rack to let it drain. Then carefully reverse the savarin onto a serving plate. It should be served puffed-side-down.

The Glaze

Sprinkle the savarin with more drops of liquor. Then warm the apricot jam in a small pan, and brush it evenly over the savarin until it glistens.

The Filling

Cut a small cross in the bottom of each peach and gently place them in a pot of boiling water for about 10 seconds. Remove and peel the peaches. Slice in half, remove the pits, and cut into ¼-inch slices. Place the slices in a pan of cold water in which you've squeezed half of a lemon. The acidulated water will keep the peaches from turning brown.

Whip the cream with the powdered sugar and vanilla. Place a thick layer of whipped cream in the hole of the savarin. Drain the peaches, and layer them over the whipped cream. Finish with a dollop of cream on top of the peaches.

Cut the cherries in half and place them evenly on the top of the savarin. Serve immediately.