

Four-Layer Dessert - all from scratch

You can find the original recipe that uses Jello pudding and Cool Whip here:

http://tammycirceo.typepad.com/tammy_circeo_musings_on_l/2009/07/a-holiday-treat-4-layer-dessert.html

Or go to my blog (www.tammycirceo.typepad.com), click on the Recipes tab, scroll down to Desserts, and 4-layer Dessert is the first one listed.

For best time management, make the pudding first and put it in the refrigerator to chill. About an hour before you are going to assemble the dessert, put the cream cheese out to soften, and make the crust. After the crust cools, you can easily put all the layers together.

For the first layer: Mix 1 ½ cup flour, ½-1 cup of pecans (or nuts of your choice), ¾ cups butter. Spread in a 9x13 pan. Bake at 350° F for 15 minutes. (I use spelt flour to accommodate a wheat allergy, and you can also use a gluten-free all-purpose flour mix. A recipe for one is in the same link as the original 4-layer Dessert given above.)

For the second layer: Whip 2 cups heavy whipping cream with 2 Tablespoons of powdered sugar. Mix 8 ounces cream cheese (softened), 1 cup powdered sugar, and 1 cup of the whipped cream. Reserve the rest in the refrigerator for the fourth layer.

For the third layer: In a heavy medium saucepan, combine ¾ cup of sugar, ⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder, and ¼ cup all-purpose flour. Whisk in 2 ⅔ cups milk. Cook and stir over medium heat till bubbly. Cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Remove from heat. Gradually stir 1 cup of the milk mixture into 4 beaten egg yolks, whisking constantly. Add the tempered egg mixture to the rest of the milk mixture in the saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil and reduce heat. Cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Remove from heat. Stir in 1 Tablespoon butter and 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla. Pour pudding into a bowl, place plastic wrap directly on the surface of the pudding, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Spread gently over the cream cheese layer.

For the fourth layer: Spread the remaining whipped cream on top.

Keep chilled till serving.

You can serve it just like that, topped with chocolate shavings or sprinkled with cocoa powder, or with berries on the side. For July 4th, we use berries to replicate the flag: blueberries for the stars and strawberries or raspberries for the stripes. You can also make it with a different flavor pudding ... vanilla and coconut sound good to me. Top the coconut one with toasted coconut! Yum.