

# Tiramisu or the Road to a Perfect Dish



Tiramisu, as served at [Locanda Locatelli](#), London (25.8.2007).

## Tiramisu or the difference between your average meal and a perfect dish

Have you ever tried to make tiramisu: the seemingly simple combination of mascarpone, cream, coffee and ladyfinger biscuits? On the one side the fat content of mascarpone is well above 40%, on the other side the desert should be light. My last attempt is documented in my [Cookbook](#). It uses chocolate flakes in order to make the cream part of the desert more interesting:

### Tiramisu, last best known

Whisk

2 egg yolks †  
150 g caster sugar  
4 tbsp amaretto  
until the sugar is dissolved.

Add

50 g dark chocolate, grated  
500 g mascarpone  
under constant whisking.

Whisk

200 g cream  
until stiff and fold under the mascarpone cream.

Soak the back of

24 ladyfinger biscuits

in

500 ml extra strong espresso

Cover the base of a square FORM with half of the soaked ladyfingers.

Spread half of the mascarpone cream over the ladyfingers.

Repeat with the second half.

Cover the container with cling film and store overnight in the fridge.

Just before serving cover with

Cacao powder

Serve.

Note: †Refrain from the obvious idea to fold the whisked egg whites under the mascarpone cream: This will result in a way too liquid cream that is runny when served. Furthermore, the addition of the egg white foam does not improve the taste of the cream.

But be warned: Don't try this at home: It might have been the 'best effort at the time', now it is just abysmal.

# Tiramisu or the Road to a Perfect Dish

I tasted tiramisu at countless parties and in numerous restaurants; I tried hundreds of recipes I found on the net, with no real revelation along the quest. Then, last weekend I came across a [simple looking recipe](#) I saw on [TV](#) in [Giorgio Loccatelli's 'Pure Italian'](#). At the start cups for the desert were made from biscuit batter, which were pressed into a cup-like form just after baking and before cooling:

## Biscuit Cups

Whisk

2 egg whites

50 g caster sugar

until the sugar is completely dissolved.

Fold in

50 g flour

then carefully whisk in

50 g butter, melted

until the mixture is smooth.

Refrigerate for at least 15min.

Use a [baking parchment-lined baking sheet](#) and spread a quarter of the batter into a thin circle.

Bake in the preheated oven at 170C for 10min until just golden brown.

Immediately remove from baking sheet and press into cup-like form using two moulds.

Remove from mould when cold and crisp.

Repeat the last 4 steps until all the batter is used up.

Even though I did everything according to the recipe, the batter did not result in a crisp cup. But read on, it did not really matter at all.

The cream part of the tiramisu was very light, the texture was in perfect harmony with the lightness, very soft and no palpable bubbles, but the flavor left something to be desired:

## Tiramisu Cream

Whisk

2 egg yolks

1 tbsp caster sugar

on medium speed until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture has a white color.

Add

A few drops Marsalla wine

250 g Mascarpone

and continue whisking until the mixture is well mixed and smooth.

Cover with cling film and store in the fridge until just before serving.

When ready for assemblage (this means that this is the very last step!), put the

2 egg whites

into a whisking bowl and beat until just starting to get firm, add

1 tsp confectionary sugar (icing sugar?)

and continue whisking until very firm, i.e. until stiff peaks form.

Carefully fold in the cold mascarpone cream into the egg white foam.

# Tiramisu or the Road to a Perfect Dish



Tiramisu, after following [Giorgio Loccatelli's recipe](#) as given in his show '[Pure Italian](#)' for the first time.

The biscuit fingers were dipped in normal strength espresso.

Soak 4 ladyfinger biscuits from both sides in cold normal strength espresso so long that there is no white core left.

The Assembly was straight forward:

Put some tiramisu cream into the biscuit basket, break the ladyfingers in half and put them flat but anti-parallel into the basket, cover with cream. Sprinkle with cacao powder.

Stop – there was a coffee/egg-cream that was supposed to be used to 'glue' the cup down to the plate (he did say this in the TV-Show, though it does not appear in the online recipe) and for decorating plate and dish: (You should really start here and work your way up):

## Coffee Sauce

Put

300 ml milk

in a bowl and bring to boil over a water bath.

Reduce heat and slowly stir in the following mixture

2 egg yolks

50 g caster sugar

½ tbsp. Espresso (coffee)

Continue to simmer very gently for 2 minutes over low heat.

Do not boil as the mixture will overcook and scramble.

Remove from heat and put into the fridge to chill.

Thus the final step is the garnish of the desert with coffee sauce!

The 3 major ingredients/components (Biscuit Cups, Tiramisu Crème, and Coffee Sauce), which when tasted on their own are completely unremarkable, resulted in a perfect tasting desert.

This all seems so simple, but applying it will result in a totally different cuisine. The supposedly obvious truism, that in order to get the perfect dish all its components have to be perfect (on their own), does not hold anymore (as if it really ever did). Thus you don't need the perfect noodle in order to make the perfect pasta dish, you need the perfect combination of noodle, sauce and add-ons (parmesan, pepper etc) to get the perfect taste, texture, temperature and olfaction combination.

To take things a step further one could postulate that the goal would be a meal comprising of simple, uneventful components that fuse into a taste-sensation when combined while eating.