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# SemiFreddo

Should serve six

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## Ingredients

4 large eggs, separated  
18 fl oz double cream (about 550ml)  
65g sugar (1/4 cup)  
vanilla bean  
pinch of salt

## Equipment

3 clean bowls  
1 2lb loaf tin (plus more for overflow)  
cling film  
electric beater  
freezer

## Method

This is the base recipe, to which you can add many flavours. Praline is nice. I tried it with strawberries, but discovered that they need to be cut into smaller pieces to avoid the strawberry bullet effect.

This needs 3 bowls. Borrowed from a Jamie Oliver programme.

Make sure that the egg whites cannot be contaminated with fat, or they won't whip. Put them in a clean, dry bowl, and make sure that the beaters are thoroughly washed between stages. Whip the egg whites with a pinch of salt to stiff peaks. This takes just a couple of minutes with an electric whisk. The right stage is when the peaks will hold their shape, even when positioned sideways. If you watch the whites, there will be a sudden decrease in bubble size as all the bigger bubbles vanish, and it looks almost like meringue (or American frosting).

Beat egg yolks with sugar and seeds from vanilla pod, until pale; this takes a couple of minutes with an electric whisk, and volume increases substantially.

Whip cream to soft peaks. This is one stage before butter, so take care; it will take about as long as the yolk mixture did.

Add cream to yolk mixture. Fold in egg whites. You should add any flavouring (see below) either to the yolk mix before the cream, if you want a smooth mix, or with/after the egg whites, if you want a ripple effect.

Put it into a 2 lb loaf tin lined with cling film, and leave enough extra plastic to be able to turn over the top. Don't worry if the ends of the tin aren't fully covered, they won't cause it to stick. Freeze for at least 2 hours, up to about 4. You don't want it turned into an ice brick, it should still be soft enough to spoon out; proper ice cream texture. You can turn out the loaf tin onto a plate and cut into slices if you leave it a little longer than the minimum; make sure you remove all the plastic wrapping.

Serve with soft fruits or thin biscuits.

## Praline

350g hazelnuts, 200g sugar, 4 tbs water.

You want skinless and roast hazelnuts - although you can make perfectly good praline with almonds or pecans, hazelnuts are traditional. To skin the nuts, roast them first, and the skins will come off easily by rubbing between your hands. You can roast them on a frying pan or griddle over low heat, or in a low/medium oven; be careful, as they will burn easily. Lightly grease a large baking sheet or tray. Put the sugar and water into an old saucepan over high heat, and stir until it is caramel. For the first several minutes it will first dissolve, then do a good impression of a sticky, bubbling mess. You will eventually see a colour change to brown/caramel, slowly at first, then very quickly. You want to catch it at the point where the colour change is starting to go fast, before it burns. Slightly burnt caramel is a good flavour; very burnt isn't. At this point add the nuts and briefly stir to coat them, then pour out onto your baking sheet. Spread out into a single layer, and turn back any escaped caramel. Allow to cool, which takes no time at all, then break up and feed to a food processor. Ideally, praline is a fine powder, but for adding to the iced mixture some bigger lumps make it more interesting.

## Strawberry

250g fresh ripe strawberries, chopped and crushed with 1 tbs sugar, and 2 tbs strawberry jam.

Adapt this for any other soft fruit, or make a compote for harder fruit like plums, maybe with some spices.

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