

zuppa inglese americanizzata

(literally "Americanized English soup")

Zuppa inglese is one of those superb Italian desserts that just takes too much effort unless you cheat, something we Americans are known to have few scruples about doing. Thanks to one of our great national treasures, known simply as instant pudding, you too can create a classic refrigerator cake that a real Italian may scoff at but which is guaranteed to fool any true American.

The only work involved is in making the 3 pandi spagna layers (Italian sponge cake, literally "Spanish bread"). Get the following stuff together:

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| ① | { | 5 egg yolks | ② | { | ½ teaspoon salt |
| | | ½ cup sugar | | | ½ teaspoon cream of tartar |
| | | 2 tablespoons lemon juice | | | 5 egg whites |
| | | 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel | | | ½ cup sugar |
| | | 1 teaspoon vanilla | | | ③ { 1 cup sifted flour. |

Combine group 1 in medium bowl and beat 3 or 4 minutes at medium speed (electric mixer!). Add salt and cream of tartar to egg whites in a large bowl and beat until frothy; gradually add sugar while beating until stiff peaks form. Fold yolk mixture into whites; sift flour over result, ¼ cup at a time, gently folding until just blended each time. Grease and flour 2 round 9" cake pans and 1 9" cheesecake pan (or 3 round pans if you have them, we don't) and dump batter in pans, equally divided. Bake at 325° F (220°C) for 30 to 35 minutes. Cool 10 minutes; remove from pans. Cool some more.

Now you need:

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| { | 2 small packages (3¾ oz) instant pudding and pie filling, 1 vanilla and 1 chocolate |
| | 4 cups milk |
| | 1 20 oz can crushed pineapple, drained completely |
| | ½ cup rum mixed with 2 tablespoons cold water |
| | 1 cup heavy or whipping cream, whipped and then blended with 1 teaspoon vanilla, several tablespoons confectioners' sugar |

First put down first layer cake, sprinkled with ½ rum mixture. Make vanilla pudding, wait a few minutes till solid, add pineapple and dump most of it on cake. (A bit may be better off saved.) Lay down 2nd layer cake, ditto with the rum sprinkling. Make chocolate pudding and when thickened enough, dump most of it on cake. Hit with 3rd rum sprinkled cake layer. Ice with whipped cream and stick in refrigerator. (This is the tough part if your fridge is anything like ours.) Tastes better the second day. Tell your friends how many hours you slaved over this cake. Keep a straight face.

