



# The Culinary Art of Hungary

- by - LOUIS SZATHMARY



## KRÉMES (NAPOLEON SLICES)

My correspondence, both in English and Hungarian, gives me more and more insight into the way the readers of Hungarian Heritage Review think.

It is interesting that sometimes when I offer a recipe, I get as few as a dozen requests. Other times, for another recipe, the number of requests may be tripled.

Most of the readers simply send a return envelope and don't write anything. Other correspondents write long, lovely letters. Some reminisce about their childhood. Also, I am not ashamed to admit that some are critical of my columns, and ask for certain recipes that I would not consider Hungarian or of general interest to the readers.

It may be my shortcoming that, to me, Napoleon slices, mille feuilles, or cream slices, as the Germans call them, are not really Hungarian desserts. Now, I am becoming convinced that I am wrong.

Hungarians call this delightful French concoction *kremes*, and apparently it is a strong childhood memory, and almost everybody's favorite. Many people consider it Hungarian, and many readers have asked for an easy, workable recipe for it, one which can be prepared by a young, inexperienced person in a small, not-too-well equipped kitchen.

I hope that people of other nationalities, especially those of French descent, will not consider it overly-chauvinistic that Hungarians claim this marvelous pastry as their own.

Regardless, the recipe follows. If you want to make your own dough, I will mail you upon request, the recipe for a simple dough that you can make with very little difficulty, and can use not only for Napoleon slices, but for many other good pastries. Just send a self-addressed stamped envelope to me at The Bakery Restaurant, 2218 N. Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614.

### NAPOLEON SLICES

10 to 12 servings

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 package frozen filo leaves or strudel leaves | 3 eggs                        |
| 1 cup melted butter                            | 1 pint heavy cream            |
| 1/2 cup very fine white bread crumbs           | 3 tablespoons sugar           |
| 1/2 cup granulated sugar                       | 1 pinch salt                  |
| 1 recipe Basic Vanilla Cream (see below)       | 1 envelope unflavored gelatin |
|  | 3 tablespoons cold water      |
|  | 1/2 cup water                 |
|  | powdered sugar                |

1. Defrost and handle the filo or strudel leaves according to the package directions.
2. Lightly brush 2 cookie sheets (each large enough to hold a piece of dough approximately 12 by 16 inches) with some of the melted butter.
3. Mix the bread crumbs with the 1/2 cup sugar. Lay two filo or strudel leaves on each cookie sheet. With a pastry brush, generously sprinkle the leaves with some of the melted butter, then evenly sprinkle each with some of the bread crumb-sugar mixture. Repeat this process four times on each sheet, so that you have eight leaves on each.
4. With a small paring knife, gently cut fine incisions in the pastry and bake it in a preheated 375-to 400-degree oven for 4 to 5 minutes. Remove and let the pastry cool.
5. Separate the eggs. In a large bowl, combine the Basic Vanilla Cream with the 3 egg yolks, which have been slightly beaten with a fork.
6. Beat the egg whites until they are stiff but not dry.
7. Dissolve the gelatin in the 3 tbsp. water. Bring the 1/2 cup water to a boil and dissolve the softened gelatin in the boiling water. Cool by setting the pan in an ice-water bath until the gelatin is syrupy.
8. Whip the heavy cream, adding the pinch of salt and the sugar.
9. Fold the beaten egg whites into a stiffly beaten cream. Add the cooled, syrupy gelatin and fold in with the spatula, distributing the gelatin throughout the mixture. Fold into the Vanilla Cream mixture.
10. Evenly pile this mixture on one of the pastry sheets. Place in the freezer to chill until firm.
11. With a wet, sharp knife, cut the filling and bottom pastry into serving-sized pieces. Cut the other baked pastry sheet into pieces of the same size and place these pieces on top of the precut filling on bottom layer. Chill in the refrigerator.
12. Just before serving, dust the top of the Napoleon slices with powdered sugar.

### **BASIC VANILLA CREAM**

**approximately 1 quart**

<b>1 quart milk</b>	<b>3 egg yolks</b>
<b>1/2 cup sugar</b>	<b>8 tablespoons cornstarch</b>
<b>1/2 teaspoon salt</b>	<b>3 ounces butter</b>
<b>1 teaspoon vanilla</b>	

1. Dissolve the cornstarch in 1 cup of the milk.
2. Beat the egg yolks slightly with a fork and add them to the milk-cornstarch mixture.
3. Place the remaining 3 cups milk in a medium-sized saucepan. Add the sugar, salt, vanilla, and butter. Start to heat this mixture, stirring to dissolve the sugar.
4. Once the mixture begins to boil, start to stir with a wire whip and pour in the milk-cornstarch-egg yolk mixture. You will have to beat this mixture very vigorously with the wire whip as it will become very stiff. It will not be necessary to cook more than 5 minutes; the mixture will thicken almost immediately.
5. Remove from the heat as soon as the cream is smooth and thick. Let cool.