

Crema Pasticcera – Italian Pastry Cream Recipe

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Crema pasticcera Italian pastry cream is the heart of so many beloved Italian desserts – a smooth, glossy custard that’s rich but never heavy, sweet but not overly so, and endlessly versatile. Growing up around Italian kitchens and bakeries, this was the first “fancy” cream I learned to make, even before mastering pie dough. It shows up everywhere: layered in cakes, tucked inside pastries, dolloped into fruit tarts, and folded into whipped cream for a dreamy diplomat filling.

This recipe is simple, deeply traditional, and the one I return to every single time. It’s made with just a handful of staples you probably already have in your kitchen, and when cooked low and slow, it becomes the silkiest custard imaginable. Perfect for everyday desserts or any special occasion.

Things to know about this Crema Pasticcera Italian Pastry Cream Recipe

Tips for Perfect Crema Pasticcera

- **Low heat is everything** – slow and steady prevents lumps.
- **Whisk constantly** to keep the texture smooth.

- **Strain it** if you see even a hint of curdling.
 - **Use whole milk** for richness and stability.
 - **Chill it properly** before using in filled pastries.
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Serving & Variations

- Fill cornetti, bomboloni, or cream puffs
- Layer inside sponge cakes
- Spoon into fruit tarts
- Fold with whipped cream for *crema diplomatica*
- Add cocoa powder to make *crema al cioccolato*
- Add espresso for a mocha version

Storage

- Store in an airtight container with plastic wrap pressed on the surface.
- Keeps **3–4 days** in the refrigerator.
- Do not freeze – the texture will separate.
- Ready to use your **crema pasticcera**? Try filling some of my favorite Italian desserts: classic Zeppole fried Italian doughnuts or my Christmas cream puffs and it's delicious in my Lemon Italian sponge cake





Crema Pasticcera Italian

Pastry Cream recipe

Servings: About 2 cups (fills 1 tart or 12–16 pastries)

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- **2 cups (480 ml) whole milk**
- **Zest of 1 lemon** (remove in wide strips for easy removal)
- **$\frac{1}{2}$ vanilla bean, split or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- **4 large egg yolks**
- **$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (100 g) granulated sugar**
- **$\frac{1}{4}$ cup (30 g) cornstarch**
- **2 tablespoons (28 g) unsalted butter**, cut into pieces

Instructions

1. **Warm the milk:** In a saucepan, heat the milk with the lemon zest until just steaming. Remove from heat and let it infuse.
2. **Whisk the base:** In a bowl, whisk egg yolks and sugar until pale and thick. Add the cornstarch and whisk until smooth.
3. **Temper:** Slowly pour the warm milk into the yolk mixture, whisking constantly to prevent scrambling.
4. **Cook to thicken:** Return everything to the saucepan and cook over medium-low heat, stirring nonstop, until thick, glossy, and creamy.

5. **Finish:** Off the heat, strain if needed, then stir in the butter and vanilla.
 6. **Chill:** Cover with plastic wrap touching the surface and chill until fully cooled.
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Classic Zeppole Italian Fried Doughnuts

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These **classic zeppole** are the ultimate Italian fried doughnuts – light, airy, and golden, with a delicate crisp outside and a soft, pillowy inside. Made from a choux-style dough (similar to cream puffs), they're simple to make yet irresistibly nostalgic. Dusted with powdered sugar, they bring a taste of Italian celebrations and street fairs right to your kitchen. Perfect for dessert, breakfast, or anytime you crave something sweet and comforting.

Things to know about this Classic Zeppole Italian Fried Doughnut recipe

- Zeppole are best served **fresh and warm**, straight from the fryer.

- The dough is **choux-style**, similar to cream puffs, so it's light and airy.
- You can shape them as **round balls** or **classic rings** using a piping bag.
- **Oil temperature matters:** keep it around 350°F (175°C) to ensure they puff up and cook evenly.
- Zeppole are **delicious on their own** with powdered sugar, or you can **fill them with pastry cream, custard, or ricotta** for a special treat.
- Leftovers can be **reheated in a 350°F oven** for a few minutes, but they're always best fresh.

Love Italian desserts? Try more sweet treats from the blog like Lemon Ricotta cookies or Italian lemon knot cookies – your next homemade Italian indulgence is just a click away!





Classic Zeppole Italian Fried

Doughnuts

Servings: 12–16 zeppole

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Ingredients

- **1 cup water**
- **1/2 cup milk**
- **4 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- **2 tablespoons sugar**
- **zest from 1 lemon**
- **¼ teaspoon salt**
- **1 cup all-purpose flour**
- **4 large eggs**
- **Oil for frying** (vegetable or peanut)
- **Powdered sugar**, for dusting

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Heat the liquid:**
In a medium saucepan, combine **water, butter, sugar, lemon zest and salt**.
Bring to a simmer over medium heat until the butter is fully melt
- **Add the flour:**
Add the **flour all at once** and stir vigorously with a wooden spoon.
Cook for **1–2 minutes**, until the dough pulls away from the sides and forms a smooth ball.
(This cooks out the raw flour taste.)

- **Cool the dough slightly:**

Transfer the dough to a mixing bowl and let it cool for **5 minutes** so it doesn't cook the eggs.

- **Add the eggs:**

Add the **eggs one at a time**, mixing well after each addition.

The dough should become smooth, glossy, and pipeable – similar to cream puff dough.

- **Heat the oil:**

In a deep pot, heat oil to **350°F (175°C)**.

- **Form the zeppole:**

- For round zeppole: Drop spoonful's of dough directly into the oil.

- For ring-shaped zeppole: Pipe dough onto small parchment squares, then lower into the oil and peel off the paper.

- **Fry until puffed and golden:**

Fry in batches for **3–4 minutes per side**, or until deeply golden and fully puffed.

Make sure not to overcrowd the pan.

- **Drain:**

Remove to a paper towel-lined tray to drain excess oil.

- **Finish:**

Dust generously with **powdered sugar** and serve warm.

Peach Tart with Lattice Crust – Italian Crostata

Peach Tart with Lattice Crust – Italian Crostata

If you saw my Instagram recently, you caught a glimpse of this golden, lattice-topped **peach crostata**—and now I'm sharing the full recipe! This rustic Italian jam tart, baked in a 9-inch tart pan, pairs **juicy fresh peaches** with sweet **peach jam** for a dessert that's as delicious as it is beautiful. The lattice top adds a touch of classic charm, making it perfect for summer gatherings, brunch, or any special occasion. Follow along to learn how to make this simple yet stunning **homemade peach tart** from scratch.

Things to know about this Peach Tart with Lattice Crust – Italian Crostata

- **Rustic & Elegant:** The lattice top gives it a charming, rustic look while still looking impressive for guests.
- **Fresh & Jammy:** Combines fresh peach slices with sweet peach jam for a layered, flavorful filling.
- **Easy to Make:** No special equipment needed—just a 9-inch tart pan and basic kitchen tools.
- **Perfect for Any Occasion:** Great for summer desserts, brunch, or as a sweet centerpiece for gatherings.
- **Make Ahead Friendly:** Can be baked in advance and served

at room temperature; keeps well for 1–2 days.

- **Customizable:** Swap peaches for seasonal fruits like plums, apricots, or berries.
- **Italian-Inspired:** A classic rustic crostata style that's simple yet authentically Italian.
- "If you enjoy this peach crostata, you'll love my other rustic desserts too—don't miss the Italian Crostata jam tart and Plum Cake recipes for more homemade Italian sweetness!"

Ingredients

• Traditional Peach Crostata with Lattice Top

Servings: 8–10

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Bake Time: 35–40 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

- 2 cups all-purpose flour (plus more for work surface)
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 stick ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 2 cups peach jam

- 2 fresh peaches, thinly sliced

Instructions

1. **Preheat oven** to 350°F (175°C). Grease or line a 9-inch tart pan with parchment paper.

2. **Make the dough:**

- In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, and sugar.
- Cut in the cold butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
- Make a well in the center, add eggs, vanilla, lemon juice, and zest and whisk. Start to incorporate in the dry ingredients. Then transfer to a lightly floured smooth surface and knead the dough to a smooth consistency (3-4 minutes) cover the dough and let it rest for 30 minutes for easier rolling.

3. **Roll out dough for base:**

- Roll out 2/3 of the dough into a circle slightly larger than 9 inches.
- Carefully press into the tart pan, letting the edges hang slightly over the rim.

4. **Add the filling:**

- Spread peach jam evenly over the dough, leaving a 1-inch border.
- Arrange fresh peach slices on top of the jam.

5. Create the lattice top:

- Roll out the remaining 1/3 of dough into 10 thin strips.
- Lay strips over the filling in a crisscross pattern.
- Fold the edges of the base dough over the lattice strips, pressing gently.

6. Bake:

- Brush the dough edges and lattice with a little beaten egg for a golden finish.
- Bake 35–40 minutes, or until crust is golden and filling is bubbly.

7. Cool & serve:

- Let the crostata cool in the tart pan for 15–20 minutes before slicing.
 - Serve warm or at room temperature, optionally with vanilla gelato or whipped cream.
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Italian Ricotta Lemon Cake – Moist & Fluffy

Italian Ricotta Lemon Cake – Moist & Fluffy

This Italian Ricotta Lemon Cake is a family recipe close to my heart, made with creamy ricotta for a moist, tender crumb and brightened with fresh lemon zest and juice. My love for ricotta goes back to my roots – when our family came from Italy, both my father and mother were cheesemakers. I grew up watching them craft fresh ricotta by hand, and its rich, delicate flavor has been part of our table for as long as I can remember. This cake is a simple, beautiful way to showcase that tradition, perfect for enjoying with coffee in the morning or as a light, sweet finish to any meal.

Baking this cake fills my kitchen with the same comforting aroma I remember from childhood. It's a simple yet elegant dessert that feels like a warm hug from home, and the best part is how incredibly easy it is to make – just mix, bake, and enjoy.

Things to know about this Italian Ricotta Lemon Cake – Moist & Fluffy

- **Moist and tender texture** – The ricotta keeps the cake soft and never dry.
- **Bright lemon flavor** – Fresh zest and juice give a vibrant citrus taste without being overpowering.
- **Perfect any time of day** – Enjoy it for breakfast, with afternoon coffee, or as a light dessert.
- **Simple ingredients** – Uses pantry staples plus fresh lemons and ricotta.
- **Drain the ricotta** – For best results, use whole milk

ricotta and drain it in a fine mesh sieve or cheesecloth for at least 30 minutes to avoid excess moisture in the cake.

- **Springform pan recommended** – Makes releasing the delicate cake easy.
- **Make-ahead friendly** – Stays moist for several days, and the flavor deepens by day two.
- **Versatile** – Try adding blueberries, raspberries, or a splash of limoncello for variation.

Craving more sweet inspiration?

If you loved this **Italian Ricotta Lemon Cake – Moist & Fluffy**, you'll want to try my **Ricotta Lemon Blueberry Cake** for a fruity twist, or my pureed apple walnut cake, for a delicious fall treat.

Ingredients

- **1 LB.** whole milk ricotta cheese, well-drained
- **3 large** eggs
- **1 1/2 cups** granulated sugar
- **1 1/2 cup** all-purpose flour
- **1 tsp** baking powder
- **1 tsp.** baking soda
- **1 1/2 sticks of butter at room temperature**
- **2 lemons**, zest and juice (about 2–3 tbsp juice and 2 tbsp zest)
- **1 tsp** vanilla extract
- **1/4 tsp** salt

- **Powdered sugar**, for dusting (optional)

Instructions

- **Prep the pan & oven** – Preheat oven to **350°F (175°C)**. Grease and lightly flour a 9-inch springform pan, or line the bottom with parchment paper.
 - **Mix dry ingredients** – In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
 - **Beat wet ingredients** – In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter, ricotta and sugar together until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing well after each.
 - **Add flavor** – Mix in lemon zest, lemon juice, and vanilla until fully combined.
 - **Combine** – Gently fold the dry ingredients into the wet mixture until just incorporated. Do not overmix.
 - **Bake** – Pour batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Bake for **40–45 minutes**, or until the cake is golden on top and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
 - **Cool & finish** – Let the cake cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then release the springform sides. Cool completely on a wire rack. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.
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Italian Amaretti Stuffed Summer Peaches

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One of my favorite ways to celebrate ripe summer peaches is by baking them the Italian way—stuffed with crushed amaretti cookies and just a touch of liqueur. Baked peaches like these remind me of the simple yet elegant desserts my family would enjoy after a long summer dinner. The warm aroma of bubbling peaches and toasted almonds fills the kitchen—with Italian sweetness that doesn't need much fuss to shine.

I'm using just four peaches here, perfect for a cozy gathering or an effortless dinner finale. The amaretti bring a delicate crunch and deep almond flavor, enriched with a splash of liqueur and a bit of butter. Whether you serve them warm with gelato or enjoy them at room temperature with a spoonful of whipped cream, they feel both nostalgic and just a little indulgent.

Things to Know About Italian Amaretti Stuffed Summer Peaches

1. Choose ripe but firm peaches:

You want peaches that are sweet and juicy, but not overly soft—so they hold their shape during baking.

2. Amaretti cookies bring classic Italian flavor:

These crisp almond cookies are key to the flavor. They add crunch, sweetness, and that signature almond taste. You can use store-bought or homemade.

3. A splash of liqueur adds depth:

Traditional recipes often include Amaretto, Marsala, or even a bit of rum or vin santo. It enhances the almond flavor and gives the filling a little richness.

4. A Northern Italian favorite:

This dessert is popular in regions like Piedmont and Lombardy, where both peaches and almonds grow abundantly.

5. Cocoa powder or chopped chocolate is optional—but authentic:

Some Italian Nona's add a teaspoon of cocoa or chocolate to the filling for a subtle bittersweet note. Try it if you like a hint of chocolate. I always do.

6. Perfect warm or room temp:

These peaches are lovely right out of the oven with gelato, but just as delicious cooled down as a rustic midday treat.

7. Easily doubled for a crowd:

Got more peaches? This recipe scales beautifully. You can make a whole trayful for a summer party or family dinner.

Ready to bring a little rustic Italian magic to your summer table?

Give these Italian amaretti stuffed summer peaches a try. When you make them, tag me on Instagram or leave a comment below—I love seeing your creations!

And if you're looking for more ways to celebrate peach season (or summer fruit in general), don't miss my Fresh Italian Summer Plum Cake or Rustic Roasted Pepper Salad—they're both perfect for warm-weather meals.

Recipe: Italian Amaretti Stuffed Summer

Peaches

Serves: 4 (makes 8 halves)

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25–30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 4 ripe but firm peaches, halved and pitted
- 12 amaretti cookies (crushed finely)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder or finely chopped chocolate
- 1–2 tablespoons sweet liqueur like Amaretto or Marsala
- Pinch of cinnamon
- Butter for greasing the baking dish

For Serving (optional):

- Powdered sugar
- Whipped cream or vanilla gelato

Instructions:

1. **Preheat oven** to 350°F (175°C). Lightly butter a baking dish large enough to fit the peach halves snugly.
2. **Prepare the filling:** In a bowl, mix crushed amaretti

cookies, sugar, melted butter, egg yolk, cocoa powder (if using), liqueur, and cinnamon until it forms a soft paste.

3. **Stuff the peaches:** Spoon the filling into the hollow of each peach half, mounding slightly.
4. **Bake:** Arrange the peaches cut side up in the prepared dish. Bake for 25–30 minutes, or until the peaches are soft and the filling is golden and set.
5. **Serve warm or at room temperature,** dusted with powdered sugar and topped with a scoop of gelato or a dollop of whipped cream, if desired