

Classic Italian Tiramisu recipe

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Classic Italian Tiramisu is one of Italy's most iconic desserts, made with layers of espresso-soaked ladyfingers and a delicate mascarpone cream. The modern version is widely believed to have originated in the Veneto region, in the city of Treviso, and was popularized in the late 1960s at the renowned restaurant **Le Beccherie**. This dessert was also a staple in my own restaurant, where we prepared it using the traditional zabaglione water-bath method—simple ingredients, proper technique, and patience—just as it's meant to be served in Italian kitchens and classic trattorias.

Things to know about this Classic Italian Tiramisu recipe

- **Make it ahead:** Tiramisu improves with time. For best flavor and structure, make it **at least 6 hours ahead**, or ideally the day before serving.
- **No baking required:** The only cooking involved is gently tempering the egg yolks over a water bath (zabaglione method).
- **Food-safe eggs:** The water bath brings the yolks to a safe temperature while keeping the cream light and silky.
- **Mascarpone matters:** Use full-fat mascarpone and keep it

cold until ready to fold in—this prevents a loose or grainy filling.

- **Cocoa timing:** Always dust the cocoa powder **just before serving** to keep it dry and vibrant.

▪ **Tips for Success**

- **Whisk constantly over the water bath:** Gentle heat and steady whisking create a smooth, stable zabaglione—never rush this step.
- **Do not over-soak the ladyfingers:** A quick dip (1–2 seconds) is enough. Too much espresso will collapse the layers.
- **Fold, don't stir:** When combining whipped cream with the mascarpone mixture, fold gently to keep the tiramisu light.
- **Chill thoroughly:** Proper chilling allows the layers to set and flavors to meld—this is key to clean slices.
- **Use quality espresso:** Strong, freshly brewed espresso gives tiramisu its signature depth and balance.

▪ **Storage**

- **Refrigeration:** Store tiramisu covered in the refrigerator for up to **3 days**. The flavor actually improves after the first day.
- **Best container:** Keep it tightly wrapped or in an airtight container to prevent it from absorbing fridge odors.
- **Freezing:** While tiramisu *can* be frozen for

up to **1 month**, the texture of the mascarpone cream is best when enjoyed fresh. If freezing, wrap well and thaw overnight in the refrigerator.

- **Serving after storage:** Always dust with fresh cocoa powder **right before serving**, especially if it has been refrigerated or frozen.

▪ **If You Loved This Recipe...**

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- **Italian Amaretti Cookies**– soft, almond-rich, and perfect with espresso
- **Italian Wedding Cookies** – a holiday and bakery classic
- **Lemon Tiramisu**– a summer favorite with a lemon curd, elegant finish
- **Italian Crostata with Jam** – simple, rustic, and timeless





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Servings & Timing

- **Servings:** 8–10
- **Prep Time:** 30 minutes
- **Chill Time:** 4–6 hours (overnight preferred)
- **Total Time:** About 5 hours

- **Pan Size:** 8 x 8–inch square dish, at least 2 inches deep
 - **Cook Time:** None (gentle water bath only)
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Ingredients

- 6 large **egg yolks**, room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup **granulated sugar**
- 8 oz (1 cup) **mascarpone cheese**, cold
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups **heavy cream**, cold
- 2 cups **strong espresso**, cooled
- 2 Tbsp **Marsala wine** or dark rum (optional but traditional)
- 24–30 **savoiard**i (ladyfingers)
- Unsweetened **cocoa powder**, for dusting
- Dark **chocolate shavings** (optional)

Instructions

1. Make the Zabaglione (Water Bath Method)

- Bring a few inches of water to a gentle simmer in a saucepan.
- In a heatproof bowl, whisk egg yolks and sugar until combined.

- Place the bowl over the simmering water (do not let the bowl touch the water).
- Whisk constantly for 5-6 **minutes**, until thick, pale, and warm to the touch (about 160°F / 71°C).
- Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly.

2. Add Mascarpone

- Gently whisk mascarpone into the warm zabaglione until smooth and creamy.
- Set aside.

3. Whip the Cream

- In a separate bowl, whip cold heavy cream to **stiff peaks**.
- Fold gently into the mascarpone mixture, keeping the cream light and airy.

4. Prepare the Espresso

- Stir Marsala wine (or rum) into the cooled espresso.

5. Assemble

- Quickly dip each ladyfinger into the espresso (1–2 seconds per side).
- Arrange a single layer in an 8×8-inch dish.
- Spread half of the mascarpone cream evenly over the cookies.

- Repeat with another layer of dipped ladyfingers and finish with remaining cream.

6. Chill

- Cover and refrigerate **at least 4–6 hours**, preferably overnight for best flavor and structure.

7. Finish & Serve

Dust generously with cocoa powder just before serving.

Add chocolate shavings if desired