

SMASHED LIQUORICE MERINGUES with BERRIES & CHOCOLATE CREAM

This is a very Icelandic combination; they love liquorice and chocolate. If you love liquorice, go for 2½ teaspoons of the liquorice powder. If you are unsure, go for a more conservative entry-level single teaspoon.

Serves Six to Eight

4 egg whites	500ml double cream
Pinch salt	225g chocolate (70 per cent cocoa solids), 200g chopped, 25g for shavings
200g caster sugar	150g fresh raspberries
1–2½ tsp liquorice powder (see introduction)	100g fresh redcurrants
½ tsp black food colouring (optional)	

- Heat the oven to 100°C/gas ¼. Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.
- Place the egg whites and salt in a large metal bowl and, using an electric whisk, begin whisking on medium speed. When you reach soft floppy peak stage, add a third of the sugar and the liquorice powder. Keep whisking, and when incorporated add another third, then the final third, and bring together to a fairly stiff glossy mixture. If using food colouring, stir through to give a marble effect.
- Dollop the mixture into piles on the lined baking sheet. Bake for about 1½ to 2 hours or until dry and crisp. Remove and cool. Store in an airtight tin if not using immediately.
- Make a ganache. Scald 200ml of the double cream in a pan (bring just to the boil then take immediately off the heat) and pour it over the chopped chocolate in a bowl. Stir until the cream has melted. Allow to cool to room temperature; do not refrigerate.
- When you are ready to serve, use a balloon whisk or electric beater to incorporate the remaining cream into the ganache. It tends to stiffen when left to stand, so make last minute for a light mousse-like texture.
- To serve, dollop the chocolate cream along the centre of a large oval platter. Break up the meringues and scatter them over the top, along with the raspberries and redcurrants. Finish with chocolate shavings.