

COCONUT-BANANA CREAM PUDDING

This is my “oh no” accidental pudding. It was inspired by a banana pudding recipe on allrecipes.com that didn't turn out the way it was supposed to. I changed that recipe quite a bit and of course, it's always better with freshly grated coconut.

If you want homemade coconut pudding, check-out my Coconut Cream Puff recipe. It includes my recipe for homemade coconut pudding and it is out-of-this-world -- you will have to double the batch. However, when time is short and you want something decadent, just grate a coconut and use the instant vanilla pudding mix in a box.

I prefer all the wafers in my pudding to be soft. If you want some of the cookies to be crunchy, do not top the Cool Whip with cookies until you are ready to serve the dessert.

Cut into 6 x 4 slices for 24 servings.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

- 3 – 3.4 oz. boxes of instant vanilla pudding
- 4 c. whole milk, cold
- 2 c. freshly grated coconut

Set 2

- 8 oz. Philadelphia Neufchatel (1/3 fat) Cream Cheese, room temperature
- Half of an 8 oz. tub of Cool Whip, thawed in fridge overnight
- ½ c. sweetened, condensed milk
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract

Set 3

- 1 – 11 oz. box of vanilla wafers
- 4 medium bananas, ripe (not overripe)
- Half of an 8 oz. tub of Cool Whip

Tools: *large bowl, medium bowl, large whisk, electric beater, rubber spatula, off-set spatula, 9 x 13 x 2 dish*

DIRECTIONS

1. Pour the milk into a large bowl then add all of the instant vanilla pudding mix.
2. Blend together with the whisk until it is quite thick.
3. Add the coconut and thoroughly combine. Set aside.
4. Place the cream cheese, condensed milk and the vanilla extract in the medium bowl. Beat with an electric beater until well combined. Add the Cool Whip and beat on low till very well incorporated.
5. Use a rubber spatula to fold the cream cheese mixture into the pudding mixture. Fold till thoroughly mixed.
6. Line the bottom of the rectangular dish with vanilla wafers. Break a few cookies in half to line the bare spots.
7. Scoop half of the coconut pudding over the cookies and spread out with the off-set spatula.
8. Slice the bananas one banana at a time. Layer the slices very close together, leaving a perimeter of the pudding uncovered; you don't want to see bananas along the outside edges of the dish.
9. Cover the bananas with the remaining coconut pudding.
10. Wash and reuse the off-set spatula to spread the remaining half of the Cool Whip into a thin layer over the pudding.

11. Crumble vanilla wafer cookies over the Cool Whip. Break the cookies into fours, one at a time so there are large pieces of cookies on top.
12. Place in fridge uncovered for several hours to set then cover with plastic wrap.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of Paulaq.com.