

Baked Alaska

This was called by a visiting demonstrator the Ngauruhoe Bomb. It is a lovely party-dish. Put a round sponge cake on a board or tin dish. Beat 6 egg whites with wheel-beater, adding a pinch of salt, until they are very stiff and will stand up in peaks. Have ready three or four slices of ice-cream, and build these up upon the sponge cake to represent a mountain. Stick this thickly all over with hulled strawberries (or raspberries). Add now to the whipped whites about half as much sugar as for a meringue. Whip very stiff and cover thickly the whole of the cake and ice cream. (The sugar must be folded lightly in). Be careful to cover every part thickly and thoroughly. Put in hot oven for a few minutes, until meringue becomes pretty brown. In the meantime make a chocolate sauce with water, icing sugar and cocoa, very smooth. Remove "mountain" from oven, and pour over the chocolate sauce so as to look like molten lava pouring down the mountain. If wanted for very special occasion have some rum heated in the oven and now, last thing, pour the hot rum over the bomb, set a match to it, and put the lights out in the room.

FROM THE MAILBAG

White Straw Hats

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I have a white straw hat which seems to have gone yellow. I wonder if you could supply me with a reliable way of restoring it to its original whiteness.

E.S., Rotorua.

I suppose the method used for cleaning Panama hats will do for other straw. The favourite way is to make a strong (saturated) solution of borax and warm water, and paint this all over the hat, underneath the brim as well. Let it dry, when crystals will have formed; then brush gently off with a clean nail-brush. This re-stiffens a Panama nicely, as well as cleaning it. I have heard of alum being substituted for borax (by mistake) and the result was successful. It is advisable to fit the crown of the hat over an inverted basin while working on it, to hold it in place. Another method is to mix a thick paste of powdered magnesia and water, and paint this all over the hat in the same way. Both methods are well tried.

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