

## Marshmallows

*Ever wonder how marshmallows got their name? They were originally made from the root of the marsh mallow plant, whose sap was whisked with sugar to create a foam. Modern marshmallows use gelatin, which is far easier to procure than fresh mallow root. I like to use egg whites, too—far closer to the Italian meringue we covered earlier (see page 293)—but if undercooked egg whites aren't your thing, leave them out.*

*Marshmallows are a classic example of foam colloids. They start as liquid foams: when fresh, the mixture will flow and change shape. After 12–24 hours, they set into a solid foam that has a memory of its shape. They're elastic: you can press them, but when you let go, they rebound to their original shape.*

In a small bowl, mix **3 tablespoons (21g) unflavored gelatin powder (3 envelopes)** into  **$\frac{3}{4}$  cup (180 mL) cold to room-temperature water**. Set it aside for 5 minutes to hydrate the gelatin.

In a pan over medium-high heat, create a sugar syrup by heating **1 cup (200g) sugar**,  **$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (120 mL) corn syrup**, and  **$\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 mL) water**. Heat the sugar syrup to 240°F / 115°C and then reduce the heat to low. Whisk in the gelatin and water from the small bowl until it's completely dissolved in and simmer for a minute or two.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk **4 large (120g) egg whites** to soft peak stage, either by hand or with a stand mixer. Slowly drizzle in the hot sugar syrup, whisking the egg whites the entire time. Add **1 teaspoon (5 mL) vanilla extract** or other flavoring, and if you like, any food coloring. Continue beating the mixture for a few more minutes to ensure the sugar and gelatin are thoroughly mixed in.

Dust a generous layer of **powdered sugar** onto the bottom of a baking pan (use a 9" / 20 cm square pan for thicker marshmallows, a larger rectangular one for thinner marshmallows, or a rimmed cookie sheet for mini-marshmallows). Pour the mixture into the pan and then dust more powdered sugar on top. Let the mixture set at room temperature for 8–12 hours. Turn the marshmallow sheet out of the pan onto a cutting board dusted with powdered sugar and cut it into cubes. Coat the sides of the marshmallows with powdered sugar from the cutting board.

### Notes

- *Try adding vanilla bean scrapings or other flavorings like powdered espresso, peppermint oil, or a shot of liqueur. For color on the outside, try using dyed sugar (see note on page 225); Peeps are coated in yellow granulated sugar, for example.*
- *If your marshmallows are coming out too sticky or too firm after a full day, try increasing or decreasing the amount of gelatin you're using. Gelatin comes in different strengths—measured in Blooms, based on a scale created by Oscar Bloom—so there are differences between brands and grades.*