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**Shiro-An Cream**

*Shiro-An, or white bean paste, is an arch-traditional Japanese dessert ingredient frequently found in wagashi (it’s typically homemade, and very difficult to find in stores). This recipe combines it with whipped cream to create a silky dessert topper with a bit more body – and protein! – than whipped cream alone.*

Makes 1.5 cups (355 ml)

**4 ounces / 113 g dried white navy beans
1/2 cup / 99 g granulated sugar
3/4 cup / 180 ml heavy whipping cream
3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract**

1. Wash the beans in running water and then soak them, covered by at least2 inches / 5 cm of cold water, overnight.
2. Drain the beans, transfer them to a medium saucepan, and cover generously with cold water. Bring the water to a boil over medium heat, reduce to a simmer, and let the beans cook for about 30 minutes, or until they are tender. Drain.
3. Puree the beans in a food processor or blender until smooth. Meanwhile in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, combine the sugar with2 tablespoons water and bring to a boil. Once the sugar has dissolved, reduce the heat to medium and add the bean paste in four to five additions, making sure to incorporate the syrup and bean paste well after each addition. Once the mixture is smooth, remove from the heat, strain through a fine mesh sieve, and let cool to room temperature. Measure out 1 cup / 340 g; reserve any remaining shiro-an for another use.
4. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the heavy whipping cream and vanilla extract until soft peaks form. Add 1 cup/ 340 g of shiro-an in several additions, continuing to whip until stiff peaks form and all the shiro-an is incorporated. Use immediately.

FOR A MATCHA VARIATION: Mix 1 tablespoon matcha powder into the shiro-an before adding it to the whipped cream.
FOR AN AZUKI VARIATION: Mix 45 grams (3 tablespoons) azuki bean paste into the shiro-an before adding it to the whipped cream.