

Strawberry Shortcakes with Limoncello Cream

Strawberry season coincides with Fourth of July celebrations in many areas of the country. This can't be an accident. Perfectly fluffy biscuits topped with juicy red berries have been featured on Independence Day menus going back at least a century. Clearly Mother Nature was quite the patriot at heart, arranging it so that we can laze by the lake, romp in green fields or watch fireworks from the porch, all fortified with cake and fruit.

Ingredients

strawberries

- 1 quart ripe strawberries
- 1/4 cup sugar, give or take (will depend on the sweetness of your berries)
- 1 tablespoon limoncello, chilled
- 1 tablespoon julienned fresh basil

shortcakes

- 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling (spooned and leveled)
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon fine salt
- 4 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream, plus 1 tablespoon for brushing

limoncello cream

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 to 2 tablespoons limoncello, chilled
- 1 tablespoon sugar

special equipment

- 3-inch round biscuit cutter
- mesh strainer
- hand mixer or large whisk for whipping cream
- pastry brush

Directions

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

for the strawberries

Wash, hull and slice the strawberries into a medium bowl. Mix in the sugar, limoncello and basil. Set the berries aside at room temperature to macerate while you prepare the shortcakes, tossing occasionally as juices form.

for the shortcakes

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Set a mesh strainer over a large mixing bowl and sift the flour, baking powder, sugar and salt into the bowl. Add the butter to the flour mixture and quickly rub with your fingertips until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Pour the 3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons of cream in all at once, and stir just until moistened. (The dough will be ragged and not yet formed into a ball.) With a light hand, knead it a few times in the bowl until it's a smooth ball. The dough should be soft but not sticky. If it seems a dry, sprinkle a little more cream over as you knead.

Pat the dough into a rectangle on a lightly floured surface. Then fold like a letter (to fit into an envelope) into thirds. (This makes for a flaky biscuit.) Pat into 1/2-inch thick rectangle. Cut 4 biscuits. Gather up and pat the scraps again 1/2-inch thick to cut 2 more biscuits. Repeat for the last biscuit.

Place the biscuits on the lined baking sheet and brush the tops with the remaining cream. Bake until tops are golden brown and bottoms are set, 12 to 14 minutes.

for the limoncello cream

While biscuits are baking, whip the cream until it thickens, using a hand mixer on medium speed or a large whisk. Pour in the limoncello and sprinkle in the sugar. Continue to whip until the cream is billowy and holds soft peaks. Refrigerate until serving.

to serve

Slice the warm biscuits in half horizontally and place each bottom half on a plate. Spoon berries and juices over the biscuit bottoms, then cover with biscuit tops. Dollop limoncello cream and more berries over, if desired. Serve any remaining berries or cream on the side.

total time: 40 minutes

active prep: 25 minutes

serves: 7

difficulty: *easy*