

Summer Peach Ice Cream with Basil and Candied Coppa

We took that eating-a-perfect-summer-peach-over-the-sink-to-catch-the-drips feeling and turned it into a sophisticated summer treat you won't forget. Fresh basil, another harbinger of midsummer, delicately flavors the peaches before they're churned into a creamy, rich ice cream base. What could make this better? The crispy candied coppa garnish. Yep, peaches and cream with candied cured pork. It's your new tradition.

See Cook's Note on how to peel peaches.

Ingredients

custard base

2 cups whole milk
5 large egg yolks
3/4 cup granulated sugar
Pinch kosher salt
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

peaches

3 to 4 ripe peaches, peeled, pitted and thinly sliced (about 2 cups)
Juice of 1 lemon (2 tablespoons)
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
10 large fresh basil leaves

garnish

4 thin slices coppa
1 tablespoon brown sugar

special equipment

fine mesh strainer
ice cream maker
potato masher

Directions

for the custard base

Set a fine-mesh strainer over a clean bowl next to the stove. Heat the milk just to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium heat.

While the milk is heating, whisk the yolks, granulated sugar and salt in a medium bowl until completely blended.

Temper the eggs by gradually streaming the hot milk into the yolks, whisking all the time. Return the mixture to the saucepan over medium-low heat and stir constantly with a heatproof spatula or wooden spoon until the custard thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon. This will happen when the temperature reaches 170 degrees. It will take a few minutes. Do not stop stirring, and do not allow the custard to boil.

Immediately pour the thickened custard through the mesh strainer into the bowl. Remove the strainer and discard any solids. Stir the heavy cream and vanilla into the custard and let cool, stirring often. When cool, cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours until very cold.

for peaches

About an hour before churning the ice cream, toss peach slices with the lemon juice, sugar and basil leaves. Rough up the basil leaves with your spoon as you toss the mixture, so they are a little bruised and impart flavor to the peaches. Leave at room temperature for 1 hour to macerate.

for finishing

When the peaches have macerated for an hour, remove and discard the basil leaves. Use a potato masher to crush the peaches to a coarse puree. (You don't want big chunks here, but you don't want a smooth puree, either.)

Process the custard in an ice cream maker until it is soft frozen, about 5 minutes less than the manufacturer's instructions. Add in the peaches and any juices, continuing to churn for about 5 more minutes (the ice cream may be soft, but will harden in freezer). Transfer to an airtight container and freeze for several hours to cure.

for garnish

Lay the coppa slices in a single layer in a medium nonstick skillet. Sprinkle with half the brown sugar. Place the skillet over medium-low heat and cook for 2 minutes. Flip the slices and sprinkle with the remaining brown sugar. Cook for a minute, then continue flipping the slices from side to side until the brown sugar has become a syrup and the slices are glistening. Keep the slices moving so they don't burn. The whole process should take about 5 minutes. Transfer the slices to a parchment-lined plate to let cool.

When cool, finely chop and spread out on the parchment. The coppa may be sticky, but should crisp up as it cools.

Serve shards of the coppa over a scoop of the ice cream.

Cook's Note

Choose firm but ripe peaches. To peel them, bring a pot of water to a gentle boil and prepare a large bowl of ice water alongside. Carefully slip the peaches into the boiling water and blanch for 30 seconds. Remove peaches with a slotted spoon and plunge them into the ice water. After about 10 seconds, remove the peaches and pull off the skin — it should slip right off. (If it doesn't, then your peaches are not ripe enough for this method and you'll have to peel them with a knife or a serrated peeler.)

total time: 5 hours, including chilling and churning time

active prep: 50 minutes

serves: 4 to 6 servings

difficulty: medium