



STRAWBERRY AND AVOCADO SALAD WITH CRISPY PROSCIUTTO

Serves 4

Sweet strawberries and salty cheese have a wonderful affinity for each other.

2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
1-1/2 teaspoons honey
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 teaspoon salt
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1-1/2 cups strawberries, hulled and halved
1/3 cup sliced red onion
4 thin slices prosciutto (about 2 ounces)
2 ounces goat cheese or feta, sliced or crumbled
1 small firm-ripe avocado, peeled and cut into large dice
1 small Belgian endive separated into leaves

In a large serving bowl, whisk together the vinegar, honey, olive oil salt and pepper and adjust seasoning to your taste.. Add berries and red onion, toss gently and set aside for a few minutes.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place prosciutto on a parchment lined baking sheet in a single layer. Cook until prosciutto becomes crisp about 7 minutes. Alternately you can use a large sauté pan with a little olive oil spray. Transfer to a plate to cool..

Add the baby arugula to the serving bowl with the cheese, strawberry mixture, avocado and toss gently until just coated. Divide the salad among 4 serving plates, and top evenly with chards of the crisp prosciutto.

STRAWBERRY RISOTTO

Serves 4

This may sound a little off beat but the use of fragrant strawberries gives this risotto a delicious taste and a beautiful pink color.

2 tablespoons butter
1 cup Arborio rice
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/3 cup dry white wine
3 cups rich chicken or vegetable stock, heated
1 basket firm ripe strawberries, hulled and diced
2/3 cup or more freshly grated Parmesan cheese
salt and freshly ground pepper
1/2 cup toasted almonds (optional)

Melt butter in a large saucepan, add rice and onions and sauté over moderate heat for 3-4 minutes or until rice is opaque and onions soft but not brown. Add wine and stir constantly (preferably with a wooden spoon) until wine is absorbed.

Add hot stock in 1/2 cup increments, stirring constantly and making sure most of liquid is absorbed before adding additional stock. Continue adding and stirring until rice is nearly done - - that is creamy on the outside but firm (not raw) in the center. It will take 20 minutes or so.

Stir in strawberries and Parmesan and season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in almonds if using and serve immediately.

STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB MOUSSE

Serves 10-12

This is a recipe created by Flo Braker which I love. She lives in Northern California and is the best teacher and author about baking that I know.

2 cups sliced rhubarb (3/4 in. thick)
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon water
2 packages unflavored gelatin
1/2 cup orange juice (preferably freshly squeezed)
2 quarts strawberries, rinsed, hulled, and sliced lengthwise 1/4 inch thick
2 teaspoons grated orange peel
3 large egg whites
1/2 cup whipping cream
Garnish: Mint sprig

In a 2- or 3-quart pan, stir rhubarb, 1/4 cup sugar, and water. Bring to simmering over high heat, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, until rhubarb is very tender when pierced, 8 to 10 minutes.

In a small bowl, stir gelatin into orange juice and let stand until softened, 4 to 5 minutes; set aside.

Meanwhile, place 2 cups strawberries and 1/2 cup sugar in a 10- to 12-inch frying pan over medium-low heat. Occasionally shake pan and gently stir until sugar dissolves, 5 to 8 minutes. Remove from heat; gently stir in rhubarb and gelatin mixtures and orange peel. Let cool, then chill until mixture is cold to touch and flows slowly when tilted, 30 to 40 minutes (do not overchill).

In a large bowl of an electric mixer, beat egg whites and remaining 2 tablespoons sugar until soft peaks form; transfer to another large bowl. In mixer bowl, beat cream until thick, then fold in rhubarb mixture. Gently fold in egg whites until no streaks remain. Chill airtight until slightly firm to touch, about 20 minutes.

Set aside about 6 of the prettiest berry slices. In a deep 2- to 2 1/2-quart glass serving bowl, spread 1/4 of mousse in an even layer. Using 1/2 of remaining strawberries, arrange them individually on top in a very even double layer. Spread with 1/2 of remaining mousse. Repeat layering, ending with small mounds of mousse. Chill airtight until mousse is slightly firm to touch, at least 1 hour or up to 1 day.

Garnish with reserved berries and mint, and spoon into bowls.

STRAWBERRY CLOUDS

Serves 6

Any fresh berry or other fruit could be substituted for the strawberries. Meringues can be made a day ahead and stored in an airtight container. You'll need parchment paper or a silicone baking mat for this recipe.

3 large egg whites, at room temperature 30 minutes
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
1 lb strawberries, trimmed and thinly sliced lengthwise (3 cups)
3/4 cup well-chilled heavy cream

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 190°F.

Beat whites with a pinch of salt in a bowl using an electric mixer at medium-high speed until they just hold soft peaks. Reduce mixer speed to medium and add 3/4 cup sugar, a little at a time, beating, and continue to beat until whites hold stiff glossy peaks.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spoon a small dollop of meringue on each corner of parchment, then invert parchment to secure to baking sheet. Using a serving spoon or piping bag with a large tip, form meringue into 6 mounds about 2 inches apart on parchment. Using a soup spoon, lightly press down and swirl center of each meringue to spread out slightly, into a 3 1/2- to 4-inch round, and create a 1 1/2- to 2-inch-wide indentation in center.

Bake meringues until dry but still white, about 2 hours, then cool meringues in turned-off oven (with door closed) 1 hour. (Meringues will be crisp on outside and slightly soft in center.) Cool meringues completely on baking sheet on a rack.

While meringues cool, bring 5 tablespoons sugar, 1/4 cup water, and 1/4 teaspoon cardamom to a boil in a small heavy saucepan, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Pour cardamom syrup over strawberries in a heatproof bowl and stir gently to combine.

Just before serving, beat cream with 1 tablespoon sugar and 1/4 teaspoon cardamom in a clean bowl using clean beaters until it just holds stiff peaks.

Peel meringues from parchment and put on 6 plates, then spoon about 1/4 cup berries with syrup into each indentation. Spoon whipped cream over berries and top with another 1/4 cup berries with syrup. Serve strawberry clouds immediately.



STRAWBERRY SOUFFLÉS

Serves 2 to 3

This is a simple souffle that can use any berry. Perfect as a treat for you and that special someone! Recipe doubles easily.

2 teaspoons or so softened butter for the ramekins
5 tablespoons sugar plus more for coating the ramekins
6 ounces fresh strawberries, stemmed and thickly sliced
1-1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
Salt
3 egg whites at room temperature
1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
Powdered sugar for garnish

Butter the bottoms and sides of two or three 1-cup ramekins. Dust with sugar. Combine the berries, 2 tablespoons sugar, cornstarch, and a pinch of salt in a food processor and pulse 4 or 5 times until the berries are finely chopped. Scrape them into a small saucepan and over medium heat, cook stirring constantly with a heat proof spatula until thick, about 3 minutes. Take pan off heat and cool berry mixture completely. This can be done ahead.

Adjust oven rack to the lower third of the oven and preheat to 400°

Beat the egg whites with a stand mixer until frothy, about 1 minute. Add cream of tartar and beat until soft peaks form. Add the remaining 3 tablespoons of sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time. Increase speed to medium high and beat until the whites are stiff and shiny but not dry, 1 to 2 minutes more.

Gently fold the cooled, cooked strawberry puree into the whites until no white streaks remain. Divide among the prepared ramekins filling to the rims. Smooth tops with a spatula and form a “hat” in each by running a thumb around the inside edge of ramekin. (Can be prepared up to 2 hours ahead and refrigerated). Place on a baking sheet and bake until soufflés have puffed about 2 inches above the rims and a wooden skewer inserted in the center comes out clean but moist, about 10 – 12 minutes. Serve immediately dusted with powdered sugar.

John Ash 2025