

Fraisier / Strawberry Cake

Makes one 2x8-inch Pastry Ring* / Serves 8.

The Fraisier gets its name from the French word for strawberry. Most Fraisier cakes are finished with a layer of colored marzipan. This upside down version is simply unique of its kind.

The should be eaten within 36 hours – I doubt it will last that long. There are more than hundred strawberry species; only a certain size is suitable for this cake. Avoid at all cost oversized cheap strawberries; they are overgrown from fertilizer; more watery and tasteless but rather choose the medium size long conic organic strawberries that are sweet and full of flavor. Avoid washing strawberries; they will soften quickly but rather brush them gently or with a wet paper towel.

* Pastry rings can be found online.

Measuring by weight is far more accurate than measuring by volume. If you are serious about baking and want to produce consistently excellent products, use a scale.

Almond Genoise (Sponge Cake) / This upgraded genoise version gives more texture to the cake. Make a day ahead.

Makes one 8x2-inches round cake pan

4 ounces (120g) almond paste (50%) or process 2oz (60g) almond meal with 2oz (60g) powdered sugar.

1/3 cup (70g) granulated sugar

5 ea. (250g) large eggs

1 cup (150g) all-purpose flour, sifted

1.5 tsp (8g) baking powder, sifted

4 Tbsp (60g) unsalted butter, melted

Method

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat almond paste and sugar on medium speed, then add a couple of eggs gradually – increasing the speed to high. Stop the mixer. Replace the paddle attachment with the whisk (beat directly with the whisk attachment if using the almond meal mixture instead). Add remaining eggs and beat on high speed for 10 minutes. Stop mixer, mix about a cup of the egg mixture into the melted butter. Fold the sifted flour and baking powder into the egg mixture and incorporate the butter mixture. Grease cake pan with cooking spray and pour in batter.

Baking

Bake the sponge in a 350°F (180°C) preheated oven for about 35 minutes or until an inserted knife comes out clean. Remove from oven and let cool 10 minutes. Unmold sponge over rack lined with parchment. Once completely cool (make a day ahead) trim off top and slice off several 0.4-inch (1cm) thick discs. You would need 2 discs for the cake – freeze leftovers for later use. Cut 2 discs into 7-inches diameter circle making them slightly smaller than the pastry ring. This almond genoise can be kept a couple of days at room temperature, refrigerated a week or frozen for weeks.

Fraisier / Strawberry Cake

Measuring by weight is far more accurate than measuring by volume. If you are serious about baking and want to produce consistently excellent products, use a scale.

Pistachio Paste

5 ounces (150g) pistachio, toasted
1 Tbsp (15ml) peanut or grape seed oil

Method

Toast pistachio in a 300°F (150°C) oven for 10 minutes. When still warm, puree in a food processor add oil and process until completely smooth. Set aside. Pistachio paste can be kept refrigerated for up to 2 weeks.

Strawberry Punch

Simple Syrup

1/4 cup (50g) sugar
1/4 cup (50g) water
1 vanilla bean, scrap out the seeds or 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) vanilla extract

Punch

Simple syrup
8 ounces (250g) strawberries
1/2 lemon juice
1 Tbsp (15ml) Kirsch alcohol (optional)
Water to readjust consistency.

Method

Bring simple syrup to boil and let cool. Remove vanilla bean, rinse and dry out for later use. Blend syrup along with strawberries, 1/2 lemon juice and Kirsch. Add more water if needed. Use at room temp. Punch can be refrigerated up to 4 days or kept frozen for weeks.

Fraisier / Strawberry Cake

Measuring by weight is far more accurate than measuring by volume. If you are serious about baking and want to produce consistently excellent products, use a scale.

Mousseline Filling

1.5 cups (375ml) whole milk
1 vanilla bean, scrap out the seeds or 1/2 tsp (2.5ml) vanilla extract
1/3 cup (80g) granulated sugar
3 ea. (60g) egg yolks (freeze egg whites for later use)
1.5 Tbsp (15g) flour
1.5 Tbsp (15g) corn starch
7 Tbsp (105g) high quality unsalted butter, at room temp

Pistachio paste (optional)
7 Tbsp (105g) high quality unsalted butter, at room temp.

Method

Bring milk, half of the sugar and vanilla to a simmer. Meanwhile in a separate bowl, beat egg yolks with remaining sugar to blend and add flour and corn starch. Turn off the heat. Whisk hot milk gradually into the yolk mixture. Return custard to the stove, bring to boil and cook for 2 minutes on medium high heat whisking constantly. Turn off the heat and whisk in the first 7 Tbsp (100g) butter. Cool custard to 65°F (18°C) and beat on high speed for one minute then add remaining 7 Tbsp butter and continue beating until creamy and fluffy; about 5 minutes then add the pistachio paste (if the mixture turns out grainy, warm up the mixer bowl over the stove or use a blow torch to soften the fat particles). The Mousseline can be kept refrigerated for up to 4 days.

Upside Down Cake Assembly

Always purchase more fruits than you would need because some might not be good enough or oversized; about 4 lbs. (2kg). Select the nicest strawberries for the cake and reserve the others for the punch. Leftover strawberries can always be frozen for smoothies.

Over a flat surface using a round platter, line a clean freezer bag and place pastry ring lined with parchment paper. Arrange strawberries halves on the bottom in circle motion and top with a layer of Mousseline filling. Soak two-third of one sponge disc into the strawberry punch, flip and place on the top, pressing down carefully. Arrange strawberry halves (upside down) against the pastry ring. Add more filling and spread evenly using a spoon filling up any space left between each fruit. Cover the cake with more fruits, Mousseline and top with a second and last sponge disc soaked in punch. Smooth out the surface of the cake using a spatula and refrigerate a few hours or until completely set (hard to the touch). Flip cake, remove plastic, ring and parchment and slice. Decorate with strawberries, pistachio and mint leaves. Let Fraisier out for about 30 minutes before serving. Enjoy!

