

Community

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STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries! Going, going, gone!
There are still home grown strawberries available and now is the time to make the effort to guarantee that special treat at Christmas.

Can them, freeze them, preserve them in a multitude of ways. And while you're working to surprise the family this winter, enjoy them fresh.

Wash them and dip them in sugar — while you laze in the sun. Serve them fresh with clotted cream, whipped cream, sour cream. Or surprise a friend with a fresh strawberry pie.

By BETTIE BRADLEY

HANDLING WITH CARE

"Caps Off" may mean good manners, but not with regard to strawberries. Berries keep longest with caps on. This shows they have been handled gently and are not overripe.

The best berries are fragrant, solid red, well-formed and have a shiny appearance. Flavor depends upon variety and ripeness, not upon size.

DIP AND DRIP DRY

Don't soak strawberries in water — they swell, lose flavor and nutritive value. Just dip them gently and quickly in cold water — lifting out immediately and allowing sand and dirt to fall to the bottom.

Remove caps after the berries are clean and dry.

FREEZING

To successfully freeze strawberries, choose only ripe, firm berries. Sort them, wash them by dipping in cold water, dry well and remove the hulls.

For the best texture and flavor, slice the berries and pack in sugar. Use 3/4 cup sugar to 4 cups sliced berries.

If you plan to leave the berries whole, use 1/2 cup sugar to every 4 cups berries.

Quality seems to suffer if strawberries are frozen without sugar. They lose color, have a less pleasant flavor and a toughness.

Nevertheless, many berry lovers like to freeze their berries au naturel. Wash, dry completely and hull. Place the berries in single layers on shallow trays and freeze quickly. After they are completely frozen, package in freezer containers.

Plastic freezer bags or plastic cartons are the best containers. When using the bags, suck out the air with a straw before closing the bag.

When using plastic cartons, leave a head-space of 1/2 inch for pints and one inch for quarts to allow for expansion.

CANNING

If you don't have a freezer but want to preserve Ontario strawberries, try home canning. They are a little less flavorful and colorful than frozen berries but certainly better than none at all.

Prepare a boiling syrup of 1 cup sugar to 1 cup water. You will need about 1 to 1 1/2 cups of syrup for each quart of strawberries. Add the prepared berries to the boiling syrup. Remove from heat and allow to stand for one hour. Return to a boil and quickly pack berries and syrup into clean, hot mason jars.

Apply the lid according to instructions on the package and process in a boiling water bath — enough water to completely cover the jars — over high heat for 10 minutes. Don't start to count the processing time until the water in the processor is at a rolling boil.

Once processing is completed, remove the jars carefully from the processor and place RIGHT SIDE UP on a thick towel or wooden board. Leave room between jars for air circulation to allow them to cool naturally. DO NOT COVER WITH A TOWEL.

Let the jars cool for at least 12 hours. If they are well sealed, store them in a cool, dark, dry place. If any jars do not seal, refrigerate and use contents within a few days.



This is my mother's strawberry pie. Bigger-than-life memories of childhood may have distorted my judgment — but it's the best strawberry pie I ever ate.

JANE BLIGHT'S STRAWBERRY PIE

- 1 baked pie shell
- 1 qt. strawberries
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 1/2 tablespoons corn starch
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Wash berries and dry thoroughly. Remove 1 cup berries and slice. Arrange remaining whole berries in cooked pie shell.

Heat sugar, water and salt to boiling point. Mash sliced berries very fine and add to sugar, salt and water. Bring to boiling point again, removing foam from top. Mix corn starch with two tablespoons of cold water and add to hot mixture to thicken. Stir constantly and cook until clear (about 10 minutes). Cool and pour over whole berries in pie shell.



When it's time for tea — scones, strawberry preserves and whipped cream — the strawberry jam must be just right — rich berry colored, true berry flavored, not too sweet and just a touch runny.

Fresh Ontario strawberries are here, and so is the perfect jam recipe. Once you have tried this one, there will never be another strawberry jam in your life!



STRAWBERRY JAM

4 lb. Farm Fresh Strawberries (12 cups prepared)
(for a good set, use berries which are only just ripe)

4 lb. granulated sugar (9 cups)
Hull the rinsed strawberries. Put them into a pot over very gentle heat. Press the berries against the sides of the pot with a wooden spoon to extract the juice. They should be soft in about 10 to 15 minutes.

Add the sugar slowly and stir until it's dissolved. Bring the jam to a fast rolling boil and boil it for exactly 10 minutes, stirring frequently.

Let the jam stand for about 5 minutes, then skim and stir so that the berries will be evenly dispersed through the jam and pour into hot sterilized jars. Cover at once with 1/2 inch paraffin. Cool, then cover with tight lids.



PICK YOUR OWN BERRIES

BUTT'S BERRY FARM on Embleton Road, beside the school, in Huttonville. Open daily 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

PALLET'S FARM, five miles north of No. 7 highway on Bramalea Road. Open daily 8-11 a.m. and 4-8 p.m.

FERRI'S BERRY PATCH North on 5th Line West — just above Steeles Avenue. Open daily 8 a.m. until dark.

FAIRVIEW FARM Third Line west of Highway 10, between Steeles Avenue and Queen Street. Open daily 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

HILLTOP ORCHARDS One mile north of Steeles on Mississauga Road (at Huttonville). Open daily.

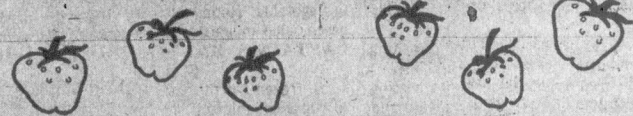
LEN RUSH FARM 1 1/4 miles south of No. 7 highway on Islington Avenue. Open Monday to Friday 8-11 a.m. and 5-8 p.m., Saturdays 8 a.m. to noon.

STRAWBERRY FARM 450 Winston Churchill Blvd., just north of Lakeshore Road East. After 3 p.m. daily.

HOMEMADE STRAWBERRY SHERBET

- 2 tablespoons gelatin
- 3 cups cold water
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup strained strawberry juice
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice

Soften gelatin in 1/2 cup cold water; dissolve in boiling water. Add sugar, fruit juices and remaining 2 1/2 cups cold water. Strain and freeze. Yield: 2 quarts sherbet.



STRAWBERRY-PINEAPPLE COCKTAIL

- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 1 cup diced pineapple
- 1 cup strawberries
- sugar

Combine the orange with the lemon juice (sweetened to taste) but keeping the mixture rather tart. Chill. Wash and dry the berries and hull.

To serve, cut the berries in half (reserving 6 large ones), mix with the pineapple, place in sherbet glasses and cover with fruit juice.

One perfect berry set in a tiny circle of pineapple decorates the top of each cocktail.



FRESH STRAWBERRY ROLL

- Jelly Roll
- 4 egg yolks
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 4 egg whites
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup cake and pastry flour
- 3/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- icing sugar

Line bottom of greased 10 1/2 x 15 1/2-inch jelly roll pan with greased waxed paper. Beat yolks until light. Gradually beat in 1/4 cup sugar. Add vanilla. Beat whites until stiff but not dry. Gradually beat in 1/2 cup sugar and continue beating until glossy. Fold in yolk mixture. Sift dry ingredients and fold into egg mixture. Turn into prepared pan. Bake 8 to 10 minutes at 400 degrees F. Sieve icing sugar on dish towel to lightly cover. Invert cake on towel, remove pan and peel off paper. Roll up cake and towel together from narrow edge. Cool.

Filling
1/2 pint (1 1/4 cups) whipping cream, whipped
2 tablespoons icing sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups sliced strawberries (about 1 pint)

Beat whipped cream, icing sugar and vanilla together. Unroll cake and spread with cream. Arrange strawberries on top. Reroll and refrigerate 2 hours. Sprinkle with icing sugar and garnish with strawberries if desired. Makes 10 to 12 slices. Note: May be spread on a commercial jelly roll if desired.



STRAWBERRY SWIRL

- Crust
- 1 cup graham wafer crumbs
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- Combine ingredients. Press into 8-inch square cake pan. Chill.

Filling
2 tablespoons sugar
2 cups sliced strawberries (about 1 pint)
1 3-ounce package strawberry jelly powder
1 cup boiling water
1 cup syrup from strawberries plus water

5 cups miniature marshmallows
1/2 cup milk
1/2 pint (1 1/4 cups) whipping cream, whipped
Sprinkle sugar over strawberries, let stand 1/2 hour. Drain, reserving syrup. Dissolve jelly powder in boiling water. Stir in syrup from strawberries plus water. Chill until partially set. Fold in strawberries. Combine marshmallows and milk, stir and cook till marshmallows melt. Cool. Fold in whipped cream. Swirl marshmallow mixture into gelatin. Pour over crumb crust. Chill 2 hours. Makes 9 squares.



Combine strawberries with tangy plain yogurt, sugar to add some sweetness, almond extract to complement the strawberries, and top the whole thing off with toasted almonds. The results — simply delicious. A recipe you should try.

STRAWBERRIES 'N' YOGURT

- 1 pint strawberries
- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1/2-1 tsp. almond extract
- 2 tbsp (1 oz) blanched slivered almonds, toasted
- Rinse and hull strawberries.
- Combine yogurt, sugar, and almond extract. Fold in strawberries.