

**THE MILLENNIAL COOK**  
FARIHA AMBER



# Strawberries and cream: Makings of divine desserts

As we embrace the colours of spring, we not only welcome flowers and festivities, but also greet the season of strawberries. Having a hot and humid climate, the season of strawberries does not last long in our country. We wait all year round for this time of the year just to be able to taste the fruity flavour of fresh strawberries, and foodies like me can fully resonate.

While the tart and sweet strawberries of our country can be used to make a variety of recipes ranging from basic jams to classic desserts, there is something unmatched about the combination of strawberries with cream. The way the tartness of the berries meld with the luscious cream creates an irresistible sensation in the mouth.

There are recipes aplenty to make, featuring strawberries and cream, but here are a few handpicked favourites that are bursting with fruity and creamy flavours! Try them while the season lasts.

## STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE CUPCAKES

*These vanilla cupcakes are filled with a delectable strawberry filling, topped with whipped cream and fresh strawberries, which have everything about a strawberry shortcake but in cupcake form!*



### Ingredients

2 whole eggs  
2 egg whites  
¾ cup sugar  
1½ cups oil  
1 tsp vanilla essence  
1½ tsp baking powder  
2 cups flour  
¾ cup milk  
¼ cup sour cream  
1 cup whipping cream

### For the filling —

2 cups fresh strawberries  
2 tbsp strawberry jam

### Method

Beat eggs and egg whites on high speed until they are fluffy and add sugar. Continue beating until the sugar is completely combined and then incorporate oil and

vanilla extract. Sift the flour and baking powder together and lower the speed of your mixer. Gradually add in flour, alternating with milk and sour cream until you get a homogenous mixture. Pour the batter into cupcake liners and bake them in a preheated oven at 160°C for 25-30 minutes.

Meanwhile, dice one cup of strawberries into little pieces and combine with strawberry jam. Once the cupcakes are cooked and cooled, make a hollow in the centre of each cupcake and fill them with the mixture. Whip chilled cream to attain stiff peaks and pipe them over the cupcakes. Finally, top them with fresh strawberries.

## STRAWBERRY PANNA COTTA

*Panna cotta is an Italian term meaning cooked cream. And what can be better paired with cooked cream than the season's freshest strawberries?*



### Ingredients

1 cup cream  
1 cup milk  
¼ cup sugar  
½ tsp gelatine powder  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
*For the strawberry sauce —*  
2 cups fresh strawberries

2 tbsp water  
3 tbsp sugar

### Method

Soak the gelatine with 2 tablespoons of cold water and let it swell for 5-10 minutes. In a saucepan, bring the cream, milk, and sugar to a simmer, being careful not to boil it. Once the sugar has dissolved and the mixture is steaming hot, remove from heat and add in vanilla extract. Let it cool for 5 minutes before mixing the gelatine.

Pour this onto serving glasses and let it chill in the refrigerator until completely set. To make the strawberry sauce, cut them into quarters, sprinkle sugar and let them rest — this will draw out natural juices and remove the tartness of berries. Add them to a saucepan with water and cook for about 5 minutes, crushing the strawberries in the process.

Cool the strawberry mixture and once the panna cottas are set, pour over the chunky sauce and let it cool in the fridge before serving.

## STRAWBERRY CREAM CHEESE TARTS

*This tart gives delight in every bite as the various textures of the crispy biscuit crust, creamy cream cheese filling and fresh strawberries on top come together.*

### Ingredients

*For the crust —*  
200g cold butter  
1 egg  
2 cups flour  
1/3 cup caster sugar  
*For the filling —*  
250g cream cheese  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
2 tbsp strawberry jam  
½ cup cream  
¼ cup sugar

2 cups fresh strawberries

### Method

Cut the butter into little cubes and use your fingertips to combine with the flour and sugar. After that, add a beaten egg and knead until it forms a dough. Let this cool in the refrigerator before rolling it out and placing in an oiled tart pan. Scrape off the excess from the edges and poke holes with a fork. Let it bake at 180°C in a preheated oven for 15-20 minutes.

Beat the cream cheese, sugar, jam, and vanilla to make a smooth mixture and whip the cream to form stiff peaks — fold them together. Pour this mixture into the cooled and baked tart shell levelling the top. Slice fresh strawberries and decorate the top before serving.

## STRAWBERRY AND CREAM BREAKFAST CUPS

*This simple breakfast idea can be your quick fix for breakfast that requires minimal ingredients but is utterly delicious.*

### Ingredients

6 slices bread  
3 tbsp melted butter  
1/3 cup cream  
1 tsp cinnamon sugar  
1 cup fresh strawberries

### Method

Slather butter onto both sides of the bread and press them down to the dents in a muffin tray, creating a cup-like shape. Toast this in the oven at 160°C for 8-10 minutes. Meanwhile, whip the cream and cinnamon sugar. Once the bread is toasted, let it cool and add dollops of whipped cream. Finally, top with fresh strawberries before eating.

**By Fariha Amber**

**Food & Photo: Fariha Amber**