



Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

First fruit of season bursting with extra flavor

Spring melons, strawberries and other fruits are larger and juicier, bursting with extra flavor their winter cousins lack. Peaches blush rosy and, peeled and sectioned, glisten in golden splendor on a plate.

The first of any fruit is best eaten straight from the hand, no washing, peeling, cutting, etc. Just popped into the mouth or savored bite by delicious bite.

Later, when that first craving has been eased, pile a plate with sections of half a dozen fruits and enjoy a fruit salad as a first course, main course or dessert.

Fruit salads can be tart or sweet. Choose flavors that merge or contrast to enhance each other. The colors add beauty to any meal.

Some fruits such as apples, pears, peaches and bananas darken after cutting and should be brushed with lemon juice to prevent discoloration.

Then top them off with one of the dressings below for a sunny, delightful treat. Sprinkle pine nuts or sliced blanched or toasted almonds on top for a crunchy contrast.

SOUR CREAM AND STRAWBERRY DRESSING

Makes about 2 cups

1 1/4 cups sour cream
1 1/4 cups strawberries, hulled, sliced and sweetened, or
1 10-oz. pkg. frozen sweetened strawberries, thawed

Combine the sour cream and strawberries in a bowl. Stir until well

blended. Cover and chill.

SOUR CREAM AND HONEY DRESSING

Makes about 1 cup.

1 cup sour cream
1 1/4 tsp. honey
1 1/4 tsp. freshly squeezed and strained lemon or lime juice
1/4 tsp. salt

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl. Stir until well blended. Cover and chill.

CREAM AND HONEY DRESSING

Makes about 1 cup

1/2 cup heavy cream, chilled
3 tsp. honey
2 tsp. freshly squeezed and strained orange juice

1 tsp. freshly squeezed and strained lemon juice

In a chilled bowl, whip the cream with a whisk or a rotary or electric beater until medium thick. Combine the honey, orange juice, and lemon juice. Add to the cream and beat until well blended.

SOUR CREAM, HONEY, AND CREME DE MENTHE DRESSING

Makes about 1 1/2 cups

1 cup sour cream
1 tsp. honey or to taste
1 1/2 tsp. green creme de menthe liqueur
1 drop green food coloring (optional)

Combine all the ingredients in a

bowl. Stir until thoroughly blended. Cover and chill.

Yogurt, lime and creme de menthe dressing variation: Combine 1 cup unflavored yogurt, freshly squeezed and strained juice of 3 limes, 2 tablespoons green creme de menthe liqueur and 1 mint sprig, minced (optional) in a bowl. Stir until well blended. Chill and serve as above.

SOUR CREAM, HONEY AND ORANGE RIND DRESSING

Makes about 1 cup

1 cup sour cream
2 tsp. honey
1/4 tsp. grated orange rind

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl. Stir until well blended. Cover and chill. Serve over sliced oranges, pears,

or other fruit.

BANANA CREAM DRESSING

Makes about 2 cups

2 tsp. brown sugar
2 tsp. honey
3 medium fully ripe bananas, peeled and mashed
1 cup heavy cream, whipped

Combine the brown sugar and honey with the mashed bananas and blend until smooth. Force through a sieve. Fold the whipped cream into the banana mixture. Serve with dessert fruit salads.

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This Short Torte used pound cake

When the first strawberries reach the supermarkets, chances are just about everyone will be making shortcake or one of its delicious variations for dessert.

A simple way to prepare it is to use a pound cake.

STRAWBERRY SHORT TORTE

1 pound cake (10 1/4-oz. size)
4 tsp. orange liqueur or orange juice
1/4 cup orange marmalade
1 cup sliced fresh strawberries
1 1/4 cups whipped topping
Fresh strawberries, halved

Cut frozen pound cake lengthwise into 3 layers. Drizzle cut side of bottom 2 layers with orange liqueur; spread with orange marmalade. Arrange sliced strawberries over marmalade. Reassemble cake, using plain layer on top. Frost top and sides with whipped topping. Garnish with strawberry halves. Makes 10 servings.



Fresh strawberries and non-dairy whipped topping combine with a buttery pound cake for a short torte with an orange touch.

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