

GRAPEFRUIT FANTASIAS!

Some cooks just love to cook. Other cooks love the chorus of oohs and ahs when they present an especially artful dish to their admiring dinner guests.

Festive dinners provide the perfect ambience for impressive-looking dishes. The dessert category especially offers plenty of latitude for culinary showoffs who like to add spectacle to delicious taste.

Here we present Grapefruit Fantasias, three dessert recipes to take advantage of the luscious Florida grapefruit coming into the markets. These yellow or pink thin-skinned beauties, heavy with juice and lots of vitamin C, add just the light, fresh and zippy ending to a big meal.

A special beauty of the grapefruit is in its versatility. Adventurous cooks usually make the happy discovery that grapefruit sections or juice are wonderful used in sauces, drinks, main dishes and desserts to impart a lively flavor.

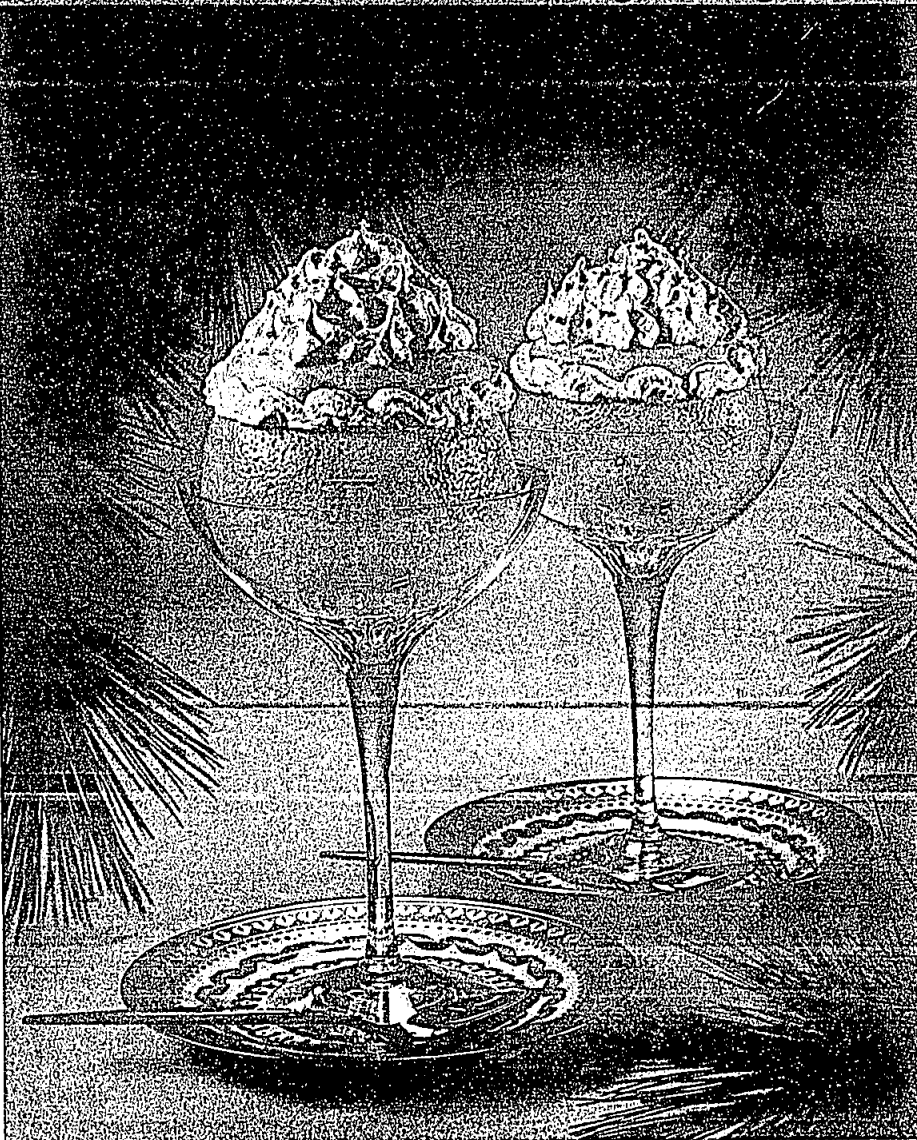
As festive desserts, however, the delectable Grapefruit Fantasias (which use all of the grapefruit, both pulp and shell) are creations that please the eye as well as the palate.

Our star is Grapefruit Meringue-Swirls, an exciting, zesty dessert. The round, scooped-out and filled shells of pink Florida grapefruit are topped with a witty, removable hat of sugar-sprinkled meringue, with more meringue used to collar and line the shells. The rich filling, lightened with folded-in whipped cream, sparkles with the fresh taste of grapefruit juice. You can use yellow grapefruit too, if you wish.

Easy to make are the appealing Amaretti Grapefruit Cups. Shells are lined with almond-flavored cookie crumbs, then filled with a delightful mixture of grapefruit pieces, chocolate morsels and fresh ricotta cheese. Toasted almond slivers add crunch and flavor.

Velvety Fruit-Filled Grapefruit offers raspberry jam swirled through a mixture of bananas, grapefruit pieces and vanilla pudding, the whole puffed with whipped cream and piled into grapefruit shells. More jam drizzled over all gives this delicious dessert a true party personality.

Here's your eye-filling, taste-pleasing proof that grapefruit are not just for breakfast!



GRAPEFRUIT MERINGUE-SWIRLS

- 4 pink grapefruit*
- 3 egg whites
- 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup sugar
- Colored crystal sugar

Slice each grapefruit one-third off top. Using grapefruit knife, section bottom portion of grapefruit; reserve sections for Meringue-Swirl Filling*. Remove all membrane from grapefruit cups. In small bowl of an electric mixer, beat egg whites, cream of tartar and salt until foamy. Gradually beat in sugar until stiff peaks form. Using pastry bag fitted with star tip, pipe meringue into four circles 2 1/2 inches in diameter on foil lined cookie sheets. Fill in center of circles. Build up layer of meringue to form cone-shaped hats. Sprinkle with colored sugar. Pipe remaining meringue in bottom, sides and along top edge of grapefruit cups. Bake meringue-lined cups and hats in a 250°F. oven 1 hour. Turn oven off and leave meringue to dry four hours. Do not open oven door. Using metal spatula, carefully remove meringue hats from foil. Spoon Meringue-Swirl Filling* evenly into grapefruit cups. Top each cup with a hat. Chill until ready to serve.

YIELD: 4 servings.

*Meringue-Swirl Filling

- 1 envelope unflavored gelatine
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 cup grapefruit juice
- 1 tablespoon grenadine syrup
- 1/2 cup heavy cream, whipped

In medium saucepan mix gelatine with sugar. Add egg yolks beaten with grapefruit juice. Let stand 1 minute. Stir over low heat until gelatine is completely dissolved, about 5 minutes. Stir in reserved grapefruit sections and grenadine. Chill until mixture mounds slightly when dropped from spoon, stirring occasionally. Gently fold in whipped cream.

AMARETTI GRAPEFRUIT CUPS

- 3 grapefruit, divided
- 2 cups ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup chocolate morsels, chopped
- 3 tablespoons confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 2/3 cup Amaretti cookie crumbs, divided
- 1/4 cup sliced, toasted almonds

Peel and section grapefruit. Set aside 8 or 10 sections for garnish; cut remaining sections into pieces. In large bowl combine grapefruit, ricotta cheese, chocolate, sugar and almond extract. Sprinkle 1/3 cup cookie crumbs in the bottom of a 6-cup serving bowl. Spoon half the cheese mixture into bowl; repeat with remaining crumbs and cheese mixture. Garnish with reserved grapefruit sections and toasted almonds.

YIELD: 4 to 6 servings.

VELVETY FRUIT-FILLED GRAPEFRUIT

- 2 grapefruit
- 4 tablespoons strained or seedless raspberry jam, divided
- 1 cup milk
- 3/4 cup fresh Florida grapefruit juice
- 1 package (4 ounces) vanilla pudding mix
- 1/2 cup heavy cream, whipped
- 1 banana, sliced

Cut grapefruit in half. With grapefruit knife remove sections into a small bowl. Stir in 2 tablespoons raspberry jam; let stand. Remove membrane from grapefruit; discard. In small saucepot combine milk, grapefruit juice and vanilla pudding. (Mixture may look curdled at this point). Cook according to package directions. Remove from heat. Cover with wax paper so that paper rests on pudding surface. Chill in refrigerator until mixture mounds when dropped from a spoon. Fold in heavy cream. Add sliced banana to grapefruit sections. Divide fruit into grapefruit halves. Spoon pudding mixture over fruit. Thin remaining 2 tablespoons jam with 1 teaspoon water. Drizzle jam over pudding.

YIELD: 4 servings.