

RICOTTA PANNA COTTA WITH LOCAL STRAWBERRIES



This recipe is in honor of Gina DePalma, the acclaimed pastry chef from Babbo restaurant in NYC. Her book, *Dolce Italiano: Desserts from the Babbo Kitchen*, inspires a reverence for simple recipes. Too often chefs over complicate dishes to make them more worthy. Sometimes less is more, a philosophy central to much of Italian cuisine. This recipe embraces straightforward preparations and quality ingredients. Good cream will really stand out, for panna cotta is one of the world's most delightful versions of cooked cream. Sweet Washington strawberries and a Macrina Walnut Anise Wafer are perfect complements to this eggless custard.

- Leslie Mackie

INGREDIENTS:

Makes 6 servings

RICOTTA PANNA COTTA

1 cup whole milk ricotta
1 cup whole milk, divided
1-1/2 cups heavy cream
1/2 cup + 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 vanilla bean
1 packet powdered gelatin (1/4 oz)

STRAWBERRY TOPPING AND ASSEMBLY

10 strawberries
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon sherry vinegar
1/2 teaspoon fresh oregano, chopped
1 package of Macrina's Walnut Anise Wafers

DIRECTIONS:

Place the ricotta and 1/2 cup of the milk in a medium bowl and whisk to dissolve the lumps. Add the sugar, gelatin and heavy cream to a medium saucepan. Cut vanilla bean lengthwise, and scrape the seeds out with a paring knife. Add the seeds and bean to the heavy cream. While whisking constantly, warm mixture just to the boiling point, then turn off the heat. Gradually pour the heavy cream mixture into the ricotta mixture and whisk to combine well. Remove the vanilla bean and strain the mixture through a fine cheesecloth or mesh strainer. Add the remaining 1/2 cup of milk and mix to combine. Divide the mixture between 6 sorbet glasses or stemless wine glasses. Place in the refrigerator for 4 hours to set.

Finely dice 9 of the strawberries and place in a medium bowl. Cover with the sugar and sprinkle in the sherry vinegar. Mix well and let sit for 1 hour before serving. Thinly slice the remaining strawberry into 6 rounds. Top each panna cotta with a strawberry round, a spoonful of sweetened diced strawberries and a sprinkle of oregano. Serve with a wafer cookie and enjoy!