



*1850's Strawberry  
Lemon Charlotte  
Russe with  
Homemade  
Blackberry Cousis,  
Whipped Cream,  
Fresh Mint & Crème Anglaise*

By Chef Marti Mongiello Serves: 4 to 6 people

Charlotte Russe: **Interesting since it is whom the Queen city of Charlotte, NC is named after.** It is said to have been invented by the famed French Chef Marie Antoine Careme (1784-1833), who named it in honor of his Russian employer, Czar Alexander I. The word "russe" means Russian in French. Some historians say that the word Charlotte refers to the Czar Alexander's sister-in-law, Queen Charlotte Sophia, Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1744-1818), who was the wife of George III, King of Great Britain and Scotland. I have a famous Charlotte Russe recipe from "The Presidents Cookbook by Poppy Cannon, printed by Funk and Wagnalls that my father obtained and sent me. A Peach Charlotte is featured in 1855 during President James Buchanan's time and a Charlotte Russe during the administration of Chester Arthur and Martin Van Buren. It is especially treasured for being served with Mrs. Lincoln at the helm of a Russian dinner in honor of Russian Admiral Lessofsky in Boston, MA in 1863.

### Ingredients

- 2 (3-ounce) packages store-bought **soft** ladyfingers (do not buy the rock-hard ones)
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin (about 2 1/2 teaspoons)

- 9 tablespoons vanilla liqueur from liquor store, and the ¼ cup used later (I like Cuarenta y Tres #43 from Spain as it contains 43 separate, secret ingredients)
- 3 cups heavy cream – try to find 42% fat content if you can, or use heavy whipping cream. Really good stores list the fat content on numerous choices of heavy cream sold on the shelf.
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon strawberry extract
- ½ teaspoon lemon extract
- 2 cups fresh diced strawberries (measured after dicing and filling up cup)
- Blackberry Coulis, recipe follows
- Crème Anglaise, recipe follows
- Fresh mint sprigs (not leaves) – regular mint is fine but farmers market or homegrown Chocolate Mint is even better!
- 1 1/2 more cups of heavy cream (this time to make a topping)
- 1 package of Dr. Oetker Whip It powder (if you want it stiffer)

### Directions

Line the bottom and sides of a 2.5 quart charlotte mold or souffle dish with wax paper. Line the sides of the mold with the ladyfingers, fitting them in side by side, with the lightly browned side facing outward. When lining the bottom, please put the browned sides down. Using a pastry brush or just by drizzling, lightly coat the ladyfingers with the 9 tablespoons of the liqueur. Set the mold aside.

Place the milk in a small heavy-bottomed saucepan and sprinkle the packet of gelatin over. Allow it to sit for 6 minutes, until the gelatin softens. Heat it over low heat ensuring the gelatin dissolves completely. Stir it continuously with a whisk. Take off of stove and stir in the remaining ¼ cup vanilla liqueur. Set aside for a few minutes.

In a cold bowl, whip the cream with the strawberry and lemon extracts until the mixture is **slightly** thickened. Add the cooled gelatin mix in and now continue whipping until the mixture forms soft peaks. Using a balloon whisk, fold in the diced strawberries and sugar. Do not over beat. Gently pour the mixture into the lady finger lined mold. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until thoroughly set, at least 3 hours.

When ready to serve to guests, unmold the Charlotte Russe by inverting it onto a serving plate and giving it a sharp tap onto a solid surface. Don't break that plate!

Mix the final, one cup of heavy cream with the package of Dr. Oetker Whip It and put into a decorating gun shooter with a star tip or into a pastry bag with a star tip and decorate the top of the cake.

Put the blackberry coulis and crème anglaise into squeeze bottles and make a nice design across and on the plate and serve right away. If you don't have squeeze bottles, just use a spoon or small ladle. Top with whipped cream, huge strawberries and fresh mint sprigs! I also like to decorate with kumquats and blackberries. Get crazy!

### Homemade Blackberry Coulis:

- 1 cups sugar
- 1 cups water
- 2 cups blackberries, packed tight
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Stage 1: In a heavy bottomed saucepan combine the blackberries and water and cook over high heat, stirring and crushing with the edge of the spoon until they release all juice and color. Sometimes I even use a potato masher! Yeah, baby! About 10 to 20 minutes depending on ripeness and strength of the blackberry.

Stage 2: Then strain hot mixture through a fine mesh sieve and return to the stove in pan. Ensure there are no blackberry seeds at all. You can compost the seeds and pulp. Add in the 1 cup of sugar and turn on high, stir for 13 minutes and remove from the heat, allow to cool to lukewarm before serving. Put into a squeeze bottle and use to make sauce designs on the Charlotte Russe. Refrigerate until needed.

### **Crème Anglaise**

- 3 Cups Heavy Cream
- 2 Teaspoons Vanilla extract
- 4 Egg Yolks
- 1/3 Cup White sugar

In a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat heavy cream and vanilla until bubbles form at edges.

Whisk together egg yolks and sugar in a room temperature bowl, until smooth.

Slowly, and I mean slowly! Drizzle 1/2 cup of hot milk mixture into egg yolks, whisking constantly. Gradually then add egg yolk mixture back into the MAIN remaining milk mixture, whisking constantly but slowly. We are not trying to intensi-whip air bubbles into the mixture. We don't need air bubbles, just continuous motion. Continue to cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture coats the back of a spoon. Allow to cool to lukewarm before serving. Put into a squeeze bottle and use to make sauce designs on the Charlotte Russe. Refrigerate until needed.