

**Fraisier (Strawberry Cake)**  
**AF DuPage Baking Demonstration**  
**April 8, 2023 11:00 am**  
**Presented by Chef Chris Thielman & Karen Thielman**

**Servings:** An 8-inch cake will feed about 8 to 10 people

**Special Equipment needed:** two 8 inch by 3 inch stainless steel cake rings, aluminum foil, 13 by 18-inch sheet pan, food processor, stand mixer, rubber spatula, wire whip, candy thermometer, hand mixer, microwave-safe dish, strainer, 3 inch tall acetate cake collar, 8 inch cardboard cake circles, pastry brush.

**NOTE: This recipe has four different elements: almond cake, strawberry mousse, simple syrup and strawberry jelly glaze. Assembly instructions are provided at the end of the recipe.**

**Almond cake**

**Almond cake ingredients:**

2 ounces cake flour

1 ounce bread flour

6.75 ounces almond paste

6.5 ounces granulated sugar

6.5 ounces European-style unsalted butter (at room temperature until very soft)

8 ounces whole eggs (room temperature)

Pinch table salt

Vegetable oil spray (do not use olive oil spray)

10-12 whole strawberries, about 1 ½ inches tall (8-10 for the assembly, 2 for the fan decoration)

Edible paper leaves (optional)

**Almond cake method:**

Preheat oven to 400°.

Prepare the cake rings: place a piece of aluminum foil under each ring and gather outside edges up and scrunch them against the outside of the ring. This will leave a flat surface at the bottom of the ring and not allow the batter to ooze out as it bakes.

Place these two prepared rings on a 13 by 18-inch sheet pan. Spray the inside lightly with vegetable oil spray. You may also use two 8-inch cake pans to bake the cakes, but you will still need a cake ring to assemble the finished cake.

In a bowl, combine the cake flour and the bread flour. Set aside.

Using a stand mixer with a paddle attachment, place the almond paste and the sugar in the mixing bowl and mix for a few minutes to start to break up the almond paste.

Add the very soft butter and continue mixing for a few more minutes at medium speed.

Add the eggs slowly, one at a time, until fully incorporated.

Add the pinch of salt.

Turn the mixer up to medium high and mix for a few more minutes. The batter will lighten in color and become fluffy.

Remove the bowl and fold in the combined flours using a rubber spatula.

Place 14 ounces of the mixture in each stainless steel cake ring. Gently smooth out the batter to achieve an even surface. Immediately bake at 400° F for 25 minutes. The cakes will be golden brown on top, will have a slight spring to the touch and a toothpick will come out clean.

After the cakes have cooled, cut one of the cakes horizontally in half. You will use ½ of the cut cake for the bottom and ½ of the cut cake for the top. The other cake will not be used for this recipe. See Chefs notes for serving ideas.

## **Strawberry mousse**

### **Strawberry mousse ingredients:**

3 sheets (8 grams) gelatin (silver strength)

40 grams water (for soaking the gelatin sheets)

25 grams granulated sugar (for the slurry mixture)

18 grams corn starch (for the slurry mixture)

18 grams cold water (for the slurry mixture)

280 grams strawberries, destemmed (fresh or defrosted frozen will both work well)

50 grams granulated sugar

280 grams heavy whipping cream

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

### **Strawberry mousse method:**

Place the water for the gelatin in a small microwave-safe container and cut up the gelatin sheets with a pair of scissors so they fit in the container. Let the gelatin sheets sit in the water for at least 15 minutes. The gelatin will turn rubbery (bloom) and absorb the water.

Mix 25 grams of sugar with the cornstarch and water (slurry mixture). Place on the side.

Purée the strawberries in a food processor or blender. Place the strawberry purée in a saucepan and add the slurry mixture. Bring to a boil while stirring with a wire whip. This mixture will get very thick.

After it boils, cook for one additional minute. Turn off heat. Add the 50 grams sugar and stir well.

Cool this mixture to roughly 100° F.

In the meantime, whip the heavy cream to soft peaks.

Take the bloomed gelatin mixture and place it in the microwave for 10 seconds to completely melt the gelatin. Do not overheat this mixture.

Fold the gelatin mixture into the strawberry mixture, add the vanilla, then fold in the whipped cream. Immediately place the combined mixture on top of the cake layer in the prepared cake ring (see assembly instructions below).

### **Simple syrup**

#### **Simple syrup ingredients:**

90 grams granulated sugar

50 grams water

**Simple syrup method:**

Place the sugar and water in a microwave-safe dish and bring to a full rolling boil in the microwave, allowing the mixture to boil for 30 seconds. It will turn clear and then be ready for use. USE CAUTION WHEN REMOVING THE DISH FROM THE MICROWAVE TO AVOID SPLATTERING.

**Strawberry jelly glaze****Strawberry jelly glaze ingredients:**

8 ounces fresh strawberries, destemmed

1½ teaspoons fresh lemon juice

6 drops red food coloring (optional)

8 ounces granulated sugar (use one half, then the other half as described below)

3 ounces liquid fruit pectin (Certo Brand used)

**Strawberry jelly glaze method:**

Purée the strawberries in a food processor and then strain to remove the seeds.

Place the puréed strawberries in a medium-size saucepan. Add the lemon juice, food coloring, and half of the sugar.

Cook to 140° F. Add the liquid pectin and the rest of the sugar. Cook this mixture on high heat to 217° F. It will take 5 to 10 minutes to reach that temperature.

Let the mixture cool slightly in the saucepan.

When ready to assemble, pour roughly half of the glaze on the center of the cake and then tilt it quickly in all directions until it reaches the edge of the acetate ring.

About half of the glaze will not be used for this recipe. Consult Chefs Notes for an optional usage of the remaining glaze.

Place the fraiser cake in the fridge overnight to finish setting.

## Assembly instructions:

If you used the cake rings to bake the cake, wash one of the rings for use in assembly.

Using a baking sheet pan, place a cake ring onto the sheet pan, then put an 8 inch cardboard circle inside the ring as a base.

When completely cooled, take one of the cakes and cut it in half horizontally.

Set the other cake aside. This additional whole cake will not be used in this recipe.

Place the bottom of the cut  $\frac{1}{2}$  cake in the bottom of the cake ring on top of the cardboard circle.

Wrap a piece of acetate around the cake so that it fits snugly around the inside edge of the cake ring. If necessary, use a piece of tape to make sure the acetate collar stays securely in place.

Take 8 to 10 whole strawberries EXACTLY the same size and cut off the stem ends, then cut each strawberry in half vertically - measure the strawberries to ensure that they are no taller than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. The berries must look as identical as possible so the finished cake will look perfect.

Take the half strawberries and place each of them next to each other on the outside edge on the almond cake with the cut side interior facing outwards and with the tips pointing up. The strawberries will be against the inside of the acetate collar.

Liberally brush the cake with simple syrup using a pastry brush.

Pour the finished mousse into the pan. It will just cover the tops of the strawberries. You may need to gently coax the mousse filling into all of the spaces between the berries to create a more perfect presentation after the mousse sets.

Place the top half of the cut almond cake on top of the mousse and gently press it so it sticks to the mousse, making it as even as possible.

Liberally brush the top of the cake with simple syrup.

Place in the fridge. After a few hours, the cake is ready for the strawberry jelly glaze topping.

After preparing the strawberry jelly glaze (see recipe above), let cool slightly and pour about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the glaze on top of the cake to create a  $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch-thick layer. For tips on how to use the remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the glaze, see suggestions in Chefs Notes.

Tilt the cake gently in the pan so the glaze will run to all sides of the top of the cake. It may be necessary to gently nudge the glaze to the edges with a small spatula.

Let the cake sit overnight in the fridge to fully set.

Garnish with strawberries sliced in a fan pattern and/or edible paper leaves.

When you are ready to serve, gently pull up on the cake ring to remove, then gently remove the acetate collar.

To slice, use a large knife and dip it in very hot water so the knife will easily cut through all the layers. On the second slice and subsequent slices, place the knife again in the very hot water and then wipe off the water and cake residue so each slice looks perfect on the cut edges.

### **Chefs Notes:**

The cake will have a more professional look if the cut strawberries are uniform in size.

You will have some leftover strawberry jelly glaze. To make use of the additional glaze, pour it into a small container (about 4 by 4 inches) while it is still warm. It isn't necessary to refrigerate the glaze, but doing so will lessen the time it takes to set. After the glaze sets, cut it into small cubes and roll in granulated sugar to make jellies (known as *pâte de fruit*).

You can bake the cakes ahead of time and freeze them until you are ready to assemble.

You need to use the mousse immediately after it is made, so prepare the pan and cake ring assembly before you begin to make the mousse. The mousse will begin to set in a few minutes, so timing is essential.

It is easy to move the baked cakes around with cardboard circles since they provide added support and help to prevent the cakes from breaking apart.

The recipe makes two cakes because it's very difficult to make and measure a small quantity of cake batter for good results. You will have one cake leftover to use as you wish – perhaps serve it with berries and whipped cream as a quick dessert for another day!