

STRAWBERRIES

STRAWBERRIES always count as rather a luxury fruit, but so many people now grow their own that I am getting many requests for dainty dishes made with them. So try these.

Strawberry Shortcake

There are two kinds of strawberry shortcake. One is made with a good scone dough and is eaten hot or cold, the same day. The other is really a good butter sponge layer cake, with sweetened strawberries and whipped cream, both as a filling and topping.

No. 1: Two cups of flour, $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt, 2 tablespoons sugar, 2 teaspoons baking powder, 3 tablespoons butter, 1 egg, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk. Sift the dry ingredients, rub in the butter lightly. Add the beaten egg and milk mixed, to make a soft dough. Roll out one half of the dough lightly on to a greased slide, spread with butter. Roll out the other half, and cover the first half. Bake in a hot oven 20 to 25 minutes. While hot, split open, and spread between the layers crushed and sweetened strawberries, and whipped cream. Cover the top with whipped cream and whole berries. Dust with powdered sugar and serve.

No. 2: Make your favourite Butter Sponge the day before. Do not hull the strawberries till after washing, or much juice will be wasted. To wash them, put the berries into a colander standing in a basin of water, and gently cleanse with the fingers. Lift out the colander and leave to drain. Hull them, and choose out a few of the biggest and best berries for the top of the cake. Sprinkle the rest with sugar (castor for preference),

and leave to stand awhile. Now put the lower half of the sponge cake on a pretty dish, cover thickly with the sweetened strawberries, then pile on plenty of whipped cream, slightly sweetened and flavoured with vanilla. Put on the top half of the cake, cover with whipped cream, and arrange the reserved strawberries nicely over the top. These berries may have been dipped into a syrup made by boiling together half a teacup of sugar and a tablespoon of water (do not let it brown). Cut the cake from the outside towards the middle, in wedge-shaped pieces.

Strawberry Meringue

In a dry basin, whip up stiffly 3 egg whites and gradually add 2 tablespoons of sugar to each white, and whip till it is stiff enough to hold its shape. Pipe or force out (through a cone of greaseproof paper), into an oval shape, high at the sides, so that it forms a case with high sides. Bake in a very cool oven about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, till set, and leave it in the oven till cold. Now put prepared strawberries in the case, pipe over 1 cup of whipped cream (sweetened and flavoured with vanilla if liked), and decorate with strawberries. Also arrange strawberries round the edge of the meringue. These should have been dipped in a syrup made by boiling $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sugar with 1 tablespoon of water till it spins a brittle thread. When serving this sweet, arrange it on a pretty dish, with strawberry leaves all round.

Strawberry Dainty

Make your favourite sponge cake—two layers. Put a strawberry jelly filling in between. This is made by letting the

jelly set a little, then whipping it up so that it remains fluffy. This stops it from being tough. Then cut a big circle out of the top layer of sponge, so that it leaves a double rim as it were, on the outside. Mash some strawberries with a little castor sugar, and fill up the cavity. Put whipped cream on, arranged prettily a few strawberries on top, and dust with castor sugar.

Deep Dish Strawberry Pie

Sprinkle prepared strawberries with sugar and a tiny bit of cinnamon—1-3 teaspoon cinnamon to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar. Arrange them in a deep dish, cover with a rich pie crust, slash it across once or twice, and bake. Raspberries or a combination of raspberries and red currants, or raspberries and loganberries may be substituted for strawberries in this pie—or in any of the above recipes.

Dipped Strawberries

This is an American confection. There they cost about 60 cents a pound in the store, but can be made at home for about 15 cents. Plus a little work and some fun. You will need one cup of sugar, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water, $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon vanilla, and, of course, the strawberries. Combine the sugar and water in a deep saucepan, stir till the sugar is dissolved, then cook slowly without stirring, until a little forms a soft ball when dripped into cold water. During the cooking, remove any sugar crystals which may form on the side of the pan, with a damp cloth. Add the flavouring, and then pour the syrup into a flat dish, first rinsed in cold water, and with a knife or similar article, work the candy back and forth, creaming it, rather than stirring, until the mixture is white and firm. Set it aside in a covered container for about an hour. Then remelt the candy mixture in a basin standing in a saucepan of boiling water, half dip in the strawberries (washed and well dried), and allow them to dry on waxed paper till firm. It is a good idea to leave the green tops on to act as "handles." Then chill—in the refrigerator if you have one—and serve the day they are made.

"Hurrah! for Mum's Cooking!"

is the family verdict

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