

SAVOUR

Last call for strawberries

Crushed, cooked or fresh off the vine, berries are divine



Strawberry colada cheesecake, above, is a yummy summer treat with sweet and juicy strawberries spooned over a colada-flavoured cheesecake.

BY JENNIFER BROWN
Staff Writer

The summer taste of strawberries may be the best when sampled fresh off the vine, but to enjoy that taste all year long, consider visiting a pick-your-own farm to stock up for the months ahead.

Even a bowl of strawberries on its own provides an excellent source of vitamin C, potassium and fibre and is low in calories.

More than half of Ontario's annual strawberry yield is harvested by consumers. And local strawberries are considered the sweetest because Ontario growers focus on growing varieties that have been developed specifically for their sweetness.

Before you go, call the pick-your-own destination before leaving to be sure of a good supply—some strawberry crops may be reaching the end of their season. Early morning and late afternoon are the preferred times for picking when the sun is not at its strongest.

To pick berries, gently hold the stem between thumb and forefinger and carefully pinch and break the stem to release the berry without squeezing the berry itself.

Look for berries that are completely red with no white or green spots and have a sweet smell. Avoid crushed berries and be wary of berries packed in juice-stained containers. The size of the berries is not important. All strawberries are equally sweet and, in fact, the smaller ones tend to be more luscious.

■ Delicious strawberry recipes, page 16.

To prepare for storing, remove any bruised or damaged fruit, trim damaged areas and store in refrigerator with hulls intact and unwashed, and lightly covered in a single layer. Use these within three to six days.

Just before serving, gently rinse under cold running water—avoid soaking, because the strawberries will absorb water and lose flavour. Gently pat dry with paper towels and hull stems.

Strawberries may be frozen whole or sliced, with or without sugar, for up to 12 months.

To freeze without sugar, place in a single layer on a large tray or cookie sheet. Freeze until firm for one hour and pack in freezer bags drawing out as much air as possible (use a drinking straw) and seal with twist tie or zipper bag.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Sharon Knox of Stouffville touts the wonders of Tequila Rose.

Berries with a kick

Looking for a new way to spice up your strawberry shortcake suppers?

Consider the unique combination of a taste of Mexico with luscious strawberry—a new cream liqueur called Tequila Rose—is a strawberry cream spiked with just a hint of tequila.

The liqueur hit LCBO stores with a festive launch on Valentine's Day and has been received well, said spirit distributor Sharon Knox of Stouffville.

"We thought it was a great product because it was completely new and unique to Canada," Knox said.

The combination of strawberry cream and tequila doesn't always receive immediate approval from consumers, Knox said, but a taste test changes most minds.

"The colour (pink) is different and when you see the strawberry, everyone says ooh, I like that, but sometimes the tequila puts people off and they refer back to their own bad tequila experience," she said. "But people are very shocked when they try it and realize it isn't as sweet as a Bailey's and the tequila is barely there."

Tequila Rose is now available in 400 LCBO stores across Ontario and retails for \$26.95 for a 750 mL bottle.

—Jennifer Brown

Rose Parfait

2 ounces Tequila Rose

1 ounce banana liqueur

2 ounces milk or heavy cream

Blend well, pour in hurricane glass top with whipped cream and sprinkle with graham cracker crumbs. Garnish with a strawberry.

Desert Rose Freeze

1 1/2 ounces Tequila Rose

3/4 ounce McCormick's Irish Cream

1/4 ounce Grenadine and ice

Blend until smooth, top with fresh strawberry.

Mexican Milkshake

1 ounce each Tequila Rose and coconut rum

1 ounce 1/2 ounce each coffee liqueur and banana liqueur

2 ounces cream or half and half

Fill a 9-ounce glass with ice and pour all ingredients and shake.

Keep your
COOL

REGULAR SIZE



\$1.99
PLUS TAX



McDonald's Restaurants
in Markham

©1999 McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited. For the exclusive use of McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited and its franchisees. All participating restaurants. Limited time only.