

## Some Strawberry Recipes

From the earliest days Iowans have looked forward with eager anticipation to strawberry time. In his review of the year 1871, the Secretary of the Iowa State Horticultural Society expressed delight with the "abundant crops of fruit of all kinds" that had been raised in Iowa.

Strawberries — This first of fruits to ripen, holds a first place in the estimation of all lovers of fine fruit. It has been said, "Doubtless God might have made a better fruit, but doubtless God never did."

The resourceful Iowa housewife was adept at making the most out of a large pan of luscious strawberries. This early recipe for Strawberry Shortcake appeared in the *Northwest Farmer & Horticultural Journal* (Dubuque) of June, 1857.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE. — Take 1 pt. buttermilk, 1 teaspoonful of soda, flour to make it about like biscuit; roll it out and bake it in a quick oven, till thoroughly done through, then cut it in two slices and put in 1 pint of good ripe strawberries, and 1 teacupful of sugar, and one of cream, between the slices, and the same on the top. It makes a nice dish for tea.

A century later, in May, 1957, the Meredith Company presented in *Better Homes and Gardens* its copyrighted recipe for this dessert.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE. — 2 cups sifted enriched flour, 3 teaspoons baking powder, 1 tablespoon sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup shortening, 1 beaten egg,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk, soft butter or margarine, 4 cups sugared sliced strawberries, and 1 cup heavy cream, whipped. Sift together dry ingredients; cut in shortening until mixture is like coarse crumbs. Combine egg and milk; add to dry ingredients, stirring just to moisten. Spread in greased  $8\frac{1}{4}$  x  $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch round oven-ware cake dish\*, *slightly* building up dough around edges. Bake in hot oven ( $425^{\circ}$ ) 18 to 20 minutes or till done. Cool 5 minutes. Remove from pan; split, lifting top off carefully. Spread bottom layer with butter. Spoon strawberries and whipped cream between layers and over top. Cut in wedges, serve warm. Makes 6 servings.

\* Or use  $8$ x $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch round pan and bake in very hot oven ( $450^{\circ}$ ).

On June 23, 1904, an Iowa editor wrote:

It is "home, sweet home," sure enough when John comes in from the corn plowing at night and finds a strawberry shortcake a foot in diameter and three inches thick on the supper table and the berries from his own garden.

A Des Moines *Register* reader concurred with the Grundy *Register* columnist on the degradation of the justly famous strawberry shortcake in 1945.

If there is anybody who doesn't rebel at the common commercial degradation of strawberry shortcake, he is indeed beyond redemption. That is why we throw bouquets in the direction of the "Vanity Box" column of the Grundy Register, which has the following to say:

Whoever thought up the current commercial substitute should blush and hang his head. Menus blossom out with "Strawberry Shortcake — 20 cents"! You hopefully order it, and in comes a two-inch square of rubbery spongecake topped by four and a half strawberries and a spoonful of gelatinous whipped cream.

Now "Vanity Box" obviously knows its strawberry shortcake, to wit:

The only shortcake worthy of the name is made of tender flaky biscuit dough, baked a pale amber and piled up in two or three layers, with a flood of slightly mashed and sweetened berries gushing out and swirling on the plate, preferably dinner-sized to accommodate the cream you will pour on gradually from your own private pitcher. THAT is strawberry shortcake, and if the gods had known about it, ambrosia and nectar would have rated a poor second on Olympus.

A more perfect description of strawberry shortcake we never read. However, we would substitute a generous sized bowl for the plate, and sprinkle with powdered sugar to taste. Further, we want nothing else on the table. When we eat strawberry shortcake, any other food, even in the same room, is obnoxious.

But what makes the conductor of the "Vanity Box" assume the gods on Olympus did not know about strawberry shortcake? As we remember, their most brilliant antics and didoes were perpetrated in the spring — which is none other than strawberry shortcake season. While ambrosia and nectar may have helped them warm up to the occasion, we'll wager that it was strawberry shortcake in them that accounted for their cutest capers.

#### STRAWBERRY RECIPES

Weaver and LeCron in their cook book, A

*Thousand Ways to Please a Husband*, 1917, agree with the old-time cooks that:

Genuine sponge cake has no baking powder or soda in it. The eggs must be vigorously beaten so that the cake will rise. A very slow oven is necessary. Increase the heat slightly every 15 minutes.

Do not cut sponge cake; it should be broken apart with a fork.

STRAWBERRY SPONGE CAKE. — One teacup fine white sugar, one of flour, four eggs, whites and yolks beaten separately, essence of lemon, bake quick. *Iowa Homestead*, April 24, 1862.

STRAWBERRY SPONGE CAKE. — 1 pound of sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of flour, 9 eggs, the juice of one lemon, and grated rind, and a pinch of salt. The yolks of the eggs and the sugar should be beaten together, the whites separately. The whole should then be put together, the juice of the lemon added last. No soda or cream of tartar should go into sponge cake, as it makes it dry. The lemon is very essential, not only for the flavor, but to make it light. The quicker it is beaten together and put in the oven, the better it is. The oven should be pretty hot. *Northern Vindicator*, (Estherville), December 16, 1869.

STRAWBERRY SPONGE BISCUITS FOR DESSERT. — Take half a pound of flour, three-fourths pound sifted sugar. Beat the whites of six eggs by themselves, add the beaten yolks and toss them together. Put in a little grated lemon peel, then the sugar, and flirt well with an egg whisk. Stir in the flour with a wooden spoon and put the mixture in small patty-pans to bake, with sifted sugar to glaze, sprinkled over the top. *Toledo Blade*, in *The Ap-panoose Iowegian*, (Centerville), October 7, 1886.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE WITH SOUR CREAM. — Two quarts of sifted flour, one even teaspoon of soda, and a little salt thoroughly mixed in the flour, one-half cup of butter or lard rubbed in the flour, one pint of sour cream, and, if necessary, sweet milk sufficient to mix a soft dough. Mix the dough as lightly as possible, and avoid kneading more than necessary. Bake in a quick oven. When done, split the cake and spread with sweet butter; sugar the strawberries, and put a thick layer between the parts. Serve with sweetened cream. "76" *A Cook Book*, Edited by the Ladies of the Plymouth Church, Des Moines, 1891.

DUTCH STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE. —  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups sifted Swansdown pastry flour,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons baking powder, pinch of salt, 1 tablespoon sugar, 2 tablespoons butter, 1 egg,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup milk.

Sift all dry ingredients together. Rub butter into flour as for tart paste, beat egg well, then add to milk and stir into flour very lightly, using a fork. Spread in a buttered layer cake tin and cover with a quart of hulled and sugared strawberries. Sugar top after berries are on and bake in brisk oven until crust is well baked. Test center with fork to be sure it is done, as batter is rather thin. This will serve five people liberally. May be eaten plain or with cream. It takes from 15 to 20 minutes to bake. Serve at once. *Clinton D.A.R. Cookbook*, 1916.

STRAWBERRY SUN-COOKED JELLY. — Put the fruit into a stone jar; set this in a kettle of tepid water, and put upon the fire. Let it boil, closely covered, until the fruit is broken to pieces; strain, pressing the bag (a stout coarse one) hard, putting in but a few handfuls at a time, and between each squeezing turning it inside out to scald off the pulp and skins. To each pint of juice allow a pound of sugar. Set the juice on alone to boil, and while it is warming divide the sugar into several different portions,

and put into shallow pie-dishes or pans that will fit in your ovens; heat in these, opening the ovens now and then to stir it and prevent burning. Boil the juice just *twenty minutes*. Throw the sugar into the boiling juice, stirring rapidly all the while. It will "hiss" as it falls in, and melt very quickly. Withdraw your spoon when you are sure it is dissolved. Let the jelly just come to a boil, to make all certain, and take the kettle instantly from the fire. Roll your glasses or cups in hot water, and fill with the scalding liquid.

Strawberry jelly should have a little lemon-juice added to that of the fruit . . . do not boil it. Set it in the sun, with bits of window glass over them to keep out the dust and insects. Remove these at night and wipe off the moisture collected on the undersides. Repeat this every day until the jelly shrinks into firmness, filling up one cup from another as need requires. This method is far preferable to boiling down which both injures the flavor and darkens the jelly. *Western Farm Journal*, July 15, 1882

STRAWBERRY SHERBET. — Remove the stems from one pound or so of the berries, mash the fruit and mix in with it the juice of a lemon, one tablespoonful of orange flower water and three pints of water. In the course of four hours' time strain the juice off the berries into another basin, pressing them to extract as much juice as possible; mix with the juice one pound of double refined sugar and stir it until the sugar has dissolved. Then strain it and pack it in the ice for an hour. *The Iowa State Register*, (Des Moines), May, 1899.

FROZEN STRAWBERRY PUDDING. — One quart strawberries, one-half pound macaroons, shake of salt, one cup sugar, four egg yolks well beaten, one cup white grape juice. Heat grape juice and pour gradually over the well beaten egg yolk, beating constantly. Add the salt and

cool. Pour this mixture over sugared berries and macaroons arranged in alternate layers. Place in ice cream mold and pack in ice and salt for six hours, or place in electric refrigerator tray and chill for five hours. Serve with sweetened whipped cream. *The Keokuk Citizen*, May, 1929.

STRAWBERRY FRITTERS. — Mix one tablespoonful of salad oil with the grated peel of half a lemon and a little flour. When smooth add the whites of three well whisked eggs and a little white wine. The mixture should be of the consistency of thick cream. Pick the tops off some large, ripe berries and put the fruit in the prepared batter. Put a lump of butter into a deep frying pan and when it is boiling drop the batter, with the strawberries, from a teaspoon into the fat. When nicely cooked remove the fritters carefully; drain them on a sieve or a colander, then arrange on a hot dish; sift some powdered sugar over and serve. *The Iowa State Register*, (Des Moines), May, 1899.

STRAWBERRY PUNCH. — Mash two quarts of strawberries to a pulp, pour over them two quarts of water and the juice of two lemons. Stand in a cool place for four hours, strain, and stir into the liquid a pound and a half of sugar. Stir until the sugar is dissolved, strain again and set in a cool place until wanted. Serve in tumblers of crushed ice. *Favorite Dishes of the D.A.R.*, Clinton Chapter, 1916.

STRAWBERRY MOUSSE. — One quart thin cream, one quart strawberries, one cup granulated sugar, one-fourth box gelatin, two tablespoons cold water, three tablespoons boiling water; wash and hull berries, add sugar and let stand one hour; mash and run through fine sieve; add gelatin which has been soaked and dissolved in hot water; set in pan of chopped ice; stir until it begins to thicken, then

fold in froth made from beaten cream; pack in ice and salt and let stand for some time. *Friends' Cook Book*, Oskaloosa, 1902.

STRAWBERRY SOUFFLE. — Pick the stems from three pounds of ripe strawberries; put these into a saucepan with the grated peel of half a lemon and one teacupful of crushed loaf sugar and allow to simmer gently by the side of the fire. Beat the yolks of four eggs in one pint of milk, sweeten to taste, stand the basin in a saucepan of hot water and stir the custard mixture over the fire until it is thick. Put the strawberries round a glass dish, forming a high wall and leaving a hollow in the center which fill with custard. Whisk the whites of four eggs to a firm froth, pour them over the souffle, cover with powdered sugar and serve. *The Iowa State Register*, (Des Moines), May, 1899.

STRAWBERRY CHIFFON PIE. — 1 pint fresh strawberries,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, 1 envelope (1 tablespoon) unflavored gelatin,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cold water,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup hot water, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, dash salt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup whipping cream, whipped, 2 egg whites,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar, and 1 9-inch graham-cracker crust. Crush strawberries (makes  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups); cover with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar; let stand 30 minutes.

Soften gelatin in cold water; dissolve in hot water. Cool. Add strawberries, lemon juice, and salt. Chill till mixture mounds when spooned. Fold in whipped cream.

Beat egg whites to soft peaks; gradually add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar, beating till stiff peaks form. Fold into strawberry mixture. Pour into crust. Chill firm. Top with more whipped cream and strawberries. *Better Homes and Gardens*, 1962.

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