

Panna Cotta



Ingredients

1 envelope unflavored gelatin (approx. 2 tsp.)

1/2 cup milk

2-1/2 cups heavy cream*

1/2 cup sugar

1 vanilla bean or 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

1 cup fresh berries, washed, drained, and sweetened to taste**

Directions

In a small bowl, sprinkle the gelatin over 1/2 cup milk; let stand until the gelatin is softened, about 5 minutes.

In a large saucepan, combine heavy cream and sugar. Add vanilla extract or vanilla bean. If using a vanilla bean, slice the bean lengthwise and scrape out seeds into cream (add whole bean to cream for additional flavor). Bring cream just to a simmer (do not let it boil), whisking

occasionally until sugar has completely dissolved; remove from heat and remove vanilla bean pod. Add the softened gelatin mixture and whisk to completely dissolve the gelatin.

Strain hot cream mixture into a large glass measuring cup with a pouring spout; pour into ramekins or custard cups. NOTE: Don't skip the straining step as it removes any bits of undissolved gelatin and ensures a smooth dessert. Also, don't let the cream mixture cool before straining. If using a vanilla bean, lightly swirl the cream to distribute the seeds evenly.

Refrigerate for at least 3 hours or overnight.

To unmold and serve, carefully dip bottom of each ramekin in a baking pan of hot water briefly.

Run a thin knife around edge of each ramekin to loosen it from the inside of the bowl. Wipe the outside of the ramekin dry and place it topside-down on individual chilled serving plate.

Carefully lift off ramekin (shake gently to release). Garnish with berries or fruit of your choice.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

*Half and half, buttermilk, whole milk, and/or sour cream may be substituted for part of the cream.

**Any assortment of fresh, seasonal fruit may be served with panna cotta, but berries are especially nice. To use other ripe, soft fruits, such as cherries, peaches or apricots, just remove the pits and peels as necessary, and cut them into thin slices or bite-size pieces.

