



## **Strawberry-Rhubarb Shortcake**

Recipe courtesy of Steve Johnson, Rendezvous Restaurant

### **For Shortcakes (makes 12-15)**

#### Ingredients

2C flour  
1/2t salt  
1t baking powder  
1/4C sugar  
3 oz cold unsalted butter, cut into small cubes (1/2")  
1C heavy cream

#### How-to:

Put the first 5 ingredients into the mixing bowl of the (Kitchenaid) electric mixer. Using the paddle attachment, mix these together on low speed until the butter is shredded into smaller pieces and distributed evenly throughout the mixture of dry ingredients. This should only take about 2 minutes.

With the mixer still on low speed, slowly add the heavy cream to the dry mix in a steady stream until the dough begins to come together and the machine starts to labor. Stop the mixer, remove the dough from the bowl and set it onto a lightly-floured work surface. You may need to gather a couple of loose pieces of dough and form it into a round ball. Flatten it out slightly with your hands and then roll it out evenly to a 1" thickness. Be careful not to overmix at any point in the process -- the dough does not need to be 100% smooth in appearance before using. This precaution will result in a flakier shortcake. At this point, you can store dough in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Using a round cookie cutter about 2" in diameter, cut the dough into circles and transfer them to a lined baking sheet. After this first round of cuts, you will need to re-shape the remaining dough again as before and cut the rest of it into circles.

Brush some heavy cream onto the top of the shortcakes and sprinkle some extra sugar on top of each one. Bake them in a 350F oven for 10-12 minutes (14-15 minutes if dough was stored in the refrigerator), turning the baking pan once to insure even baking, until the cakes start to get a nice golden color along the edges and the bottom. They are ready

to use within 10 minutes after they've had a chance to cool slightly. If you make them a couple of hours ahead of time, you might want to re-heat them gently for only a couple of minutes before using – they taste better warm!

## **2 tips for hot weather baking:**

1. After you have put the first 5 ingredients into the mixing bowl, put this bowl and the paddle attachment in the fridge for 20 minutes to make sure that everything is really cold before you start mixing. This keeps the butter cubes cold during the mixing process so they won't begin to melt.
2. After you prepare the cakes for baking, put the baking pan with the cakes into the fridge or freezer to chill them again well for 10 minutes before baking. This helps the shortcakes retain their nice round shape during baking.

One more tip: A convection oven produces better results than a conventional still oven, if you have one. The shortcakes will rise better during baking and will come out fluffier and flakier.

## **To prepare the final dish:**

Trim fresh strawberries of their stems and cut them into halves or quarters. Toss them lightly with sugar and let them stand for 15-20 minutes before serving.

You can add thinly sliced rhubarb to the strawberries if you want, but you will need to prepare it 4 hours ahead of mixing time with the strawberries. The rhubarb should be sprinkled with a little sugar and lemon juice to allow it to soften slightly before mixing with the berries. Ratio: 1 stalk of fresh rhubarb for every quart of berries.

As the summer progresses, you can also use or mix other fresh berries as they become available: blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, etc.

In my family, we always used lightly sweetened liquid heavy cream for strawberry shortcakes, rather than whipping the cream stiff. You can sweeten the cream to taste with a little sugar or maple syrup, or both.

You might also want to consider adding a little freshly chopped mint to the berries at the last minute before serving.