

LEMON-VANILLA PANNA COTTA

with FRESH BERRIES

A Panna Cotta should not be overly firm with gelatin, but just hold together and shimmer when it is moved and yield to the edge of a spoon easily. Many flavors can be incorporated into this dessert, yet it should also not be overly sweet – think bittersweet chocolate or citrus and herbs. The flavors here balance well with the richness of cream & vanilla, the sweetness of berries and the brightness of lemon zest.

When it comes to choosing a mold, many options are available from small 3 or 4-ounce ramekins for an individual serving, to larger and decorative molds such as the one pictured here. Disposable soufflé cups can also be used and make for an easy un-molding when inverted and pierced with a paring knife once situated on the plate. Another tip is to moisten the serving plate lightly with water so that once inverted the dessert can be shifted into position gently and then the excess moisture wiped away.

(OVERNIGHT RECIPE OR AT LEAST 6 HOURS)

Ingredients

1 Quart JD Country $\frac{1}{2}$ &
 $\frac{1}{2}$
1 Tablespoon Gelatin
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Sugar
Pinch of Salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon white Vanilla
Extract
1 Tablespoon Lemon Zest
2 Cups sliced assorted
Berries

Directions

Pour 2 Cups of $\frac{1}{2}$ & $\frac{1}{2}$ into a saucepan and sprinkle the gelatin over the top and allow to soak and “bloom” for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare a 1 Quart mold or several smaller ramekins with a light coating of non-stick cooking spray on the inside and set into a sturdy pan with deep sides (this is so the mold can be covered with wrap and refrigerated). When the gelatin has softened, add sugar and salt and heat the pan slowly over a moderate heat. Use a whisk to constantly stir the mixture until the sugar has dissolved, about 5 minutes. Try not to scald the milk (or worse!) as this will diminish the gelling properties. Use a spoon to collect a small amount and test to see if the sugar has melted by rubbing it between your fingers – if it is grainy continue to heat until smooth. When ready, add the remaining 2 Cups of $\frac{1}{2}$ & $\frac{1}{2}$ and then pour the liquid through a fine strainer into a pitcher or suitable pouring vessel, then add the zest and vanilla. Pour slowly into mold/s and allow to cool at room temperature for 15 minutes before covering with plastic wrap and storing in the refrigerator at least 6 hours or overnight. When ready to serve, toss berries in a simple syrup or castor sugar and set aside. Remove Panna Cotta from refrigerator and use your finger to gently pull the dessert away from the edges of the mold and then invert on a serving platter or individual plates. Jiggle the mold from side to side until the dessert releases. Arrange berries around the outside and garnish with edible flowers or fresh mint.