

Almond Berry Shortbread Torte

This is my version of strawberry shortcake. Imagine 4 huge almond shortbread cookies, layered with whipped cream and fresh strawberries.

Shortbread

2 cups ground almonds
1 ½ cups cake and pastry flour
1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup sugar
3 large egg yolks
½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Filling

4 pints of strawberries (or raspberries and blueberries)
2 cups 35% cream
2 tablespoons icing sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1. Stir together ground nuts and flour. Set aside. In the bowl of a food processor or mixer, beat butter and sugar until creamy. Beat in egg yolks and vanilla. Add the flour-nut mixture and mix until just incorporated. Remove dough from bowl, press into a flat disc, cover in plastic wrap and refrigerate for about one hour.
2. Cut 4 sheets of parchment paper, each about 12 inches square. Using a round nine-inch cake pan, trace a circle on each sheet of parchment paper. Turn the sheet of parchment paper over so that the pencil marks are face down. The outline of the circle will still be visible through the parchment.
3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Divide chilled dough into 4 pieces. Place one piece on a parchment circle and pat out with the heel of your hand to form a thick round. Cover round with another sheet of parchment and use a rolling pin to roll dough into a 9 inch round, using the pencil drawn circle as a guide. Remove top sheet of parchment paper, place dough round with bottom sheet of parchment paper on a baking sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes, until cookie round is pale golden in colour and firm but not brown and crisp. Place baked cookie round on a rack to cool but do not peel paper off until cookie is completely cool. Repeat with remaining dough pieces. When cookies are completely cool, turn cookie round over so parchment paper is on top and gently peel paper off the cookie round. The cookie

layers can be made up to 2 days ahead. If not using right away, wrap each round in plastic wrap and store at room temperature.

4. At least 2 hours before serving cake, wash, hull and slice berries. Whip cream with icing sugar and vanilla. Place one cookie round on a large cake plate. Spread with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cream. Scatter cream with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the berries. Repeat with the rest of the cookies, cream and berries. The berries on the top layer can be arranged decoratively if you have time. Refrigerate, uncovered at least 2 hours or overnight.