

Quick Autumn Berry Sponge

Ingredients:

- 1 x large shop bought sponge flan case
- 3 tbsp Tia Maria
- 500 ml double cream
- 250g mascarpone
- 2 tbsp caster sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla bean paste
- 1 large punnet of Strawberries
- 1 punnet of mixed berries, redcurrants, blueberries and blackberries
- fresh mint to garnish, optional

METHOD:

1. Cut out the centre of the flan using an 8-inch cake ring as a template. Using a sharp serrated knife cut the disc in half through the middle so you end up with two thin discs. Place the cake ring onto a serving plate and fit one sponge disc into the base then sprinkle over 2 tbsp of Tia Maria.
2. In a bowl whip the double cream to soft peak consistency then in another bowl whisk together the mascarpone, caster sugar, vanilla bean paste and remaining Tia Maria. Gently fold the whipped cream into the mascarpone mixture.
3. Take the largest strawberries, (leaving 8 smaller whole ones for garnish) and remove the stalk and cut in half lengthways.
4. Line the ring with the largest strawberry halves cut side against the ring, ensuring that they are tightly fitted around the ring.
5. Next spoon the mascarpone cream mixture into the ring and gently press to the edges, using the back of a spoon to flatten the top.
6. Place the second circle of sponge on top and press gently to ensure that the top is level. Place in the fridge for at least an hour.
7. Before serving dust the top of the sponge with icing sugar and arrange the remaining berries on top with a few sprigs of mint. Remove the ring by carefully warming the edges with a hot cloth and lifting it off.

Tip

The sponge is best eaten on the day that it is made.