

Beat the heat with gluten-free cherry almond ricotta ice cream

I grew up in a military family, which meant my childhood was spent in various cities and towns around the world, never more than three years in any one given place at a time. There were new schools, new

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Simply Gluten Free

friends and new cultures. The main constant in my life was change.

Regardless of where we lived, come summertime, there was another constant in my life — ice cream! Whether we lived in Okinawa, the Philippines or Fayetteville, N.C., we had homemade ice cream in the summer.

My father had a hand-crank ice cream machine that he would fill with whatever delicious concoction he whipped up and surround it with ice and rock salt.

Of course, hand cranking the machine for what seemed like hours quickly lost its appeal, and Dad would always end up doing most of the work while we escaped to more pressing matters.

Miraculously, the instant the ice cream was done, my sisters and I would re-appear with nothing else in the world to do but eat ice cream. This recipe is simple, egg- and refined sugar-free, has only a few ingredients and is a bit more sophisticated than flavors we grew up with.

Don't get me wrong, I have nothing against chocolate, strawberry and my personal favorite, vanilla; but every once in a while, something with a little panache is more than OK!

I started with whole milk ricotta cheese, half and half, Bing cherries bursting with juicy goodness, sweetened it up with some organic honey.

For crunch, I tossed in slivered almonds that were quickly toasted and sweetened with a tad more honey. The result reminds me of a cannoli.

If this ice cream gets too hard in the

freezer, let it sit out about 10 minutes, and it will soften up perfectly.

Cherry Almond Ricotta Ice Cream

- 2-1/2 cups whole milk ricotta cheese
- 1 cup half and half
- 3/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon organic honey
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher or sea salt
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 2 cups cherries, pitted

Combine ricotta, half and half, 3/4 cup honey, salt and vanilla in a blender, blend until smooth and all ingredients are combined. (You may need to scrape down the sides of the blender jar a couple times.)

Pour mixture into an ice cream maker and process 20-25 minutes or per manufacturer's instructions.

While the ice cream is churning, place almonds in a small, dry skillet over medium-high heat and toast until golden brown and fragrant, about 3 minutes.

Add remaining tablespoon of honey and stir to coat the almonds.

Remove from heat and pour almonds onto a plate or piece of waxed or parchment paper to cool. Cut cherries into quarters.

When almonds are cool, crumble them into little clumps. They may be a little sticky; this is OK.

During the last minute or two of churning the ice cream, add cherries

and almonds and continue to churn until they are incorporated throughout ice cream.

Transfer to a flat, shallow container (like a baking pan) and freeze until firm in the freezer, about 2 hours.

Makes 8 servings.

CAROL KICINSKI is a recipe developer, TV chef, cookbook author and editor-in-chief of *Simply Gluten Free* magazine, www.simplygluten-free.com.



RECIPE ROUNDUP

7 GREAT REASONS TO EAT CHERRIES

- Cherries are a good source of potassium. Increasing evidence shows a diet rich in potassium may help to control blood pressure and reduce the risk for hypertension and stroke.
- Cherries are a source of melatonin, an effective means for reducing jet lag and promoting overall healthy sleep patterns.
- Cherries have anti-inflammatory properties which studies suggest may help to control arthritis and gout.
- Cherries contain antioxidants, which may help to reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease.
- Cherries are a healthy snack. A serving size of 21 cherries has less than 100 calories.
- The anthocyanins found in cherries may help to reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

THE PERFECT CHERRIES

Cherry enthusiasts should keep an eye out for firm, shiny and smooth skins. In general, the darker the cherry, the sweeter, and with most varieties, darkness is a sign of ripeness. The stems should be green and flexible.

KEEPING CHERRIES FRESH

Fresh cherries should be kept in a tightly sealed bag or container and can keep for approximately two weeks in the fridge. Buy an extra bag to freeze, to have sweet cherries all year long.

— FROM THE NORTHWEST CHERRY GROWERS, NWCHERRIES.COM



Cherry Lemon Cooler

FROM THE NORTHWEST CHERRY GROWERS, NWCHERRIES.COM

- 3 cups water
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup Northwest fresh sweet cherries, halved and pitted
- 1 cup fresh lemon juice, refrigerated
- Crushed ice
- 1 bottle (1 liter) club soda or seltzer
- Northwest fresh sweet cherries with stems
- 4 long stems fresh mint

Combine water and sugar in small saucepan; add halved cherries. Bring mixture to boil; reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature.

Strain syrup into container with tight-fitting lid; discard cherries; refrigerate syrup until cold. Fill a tall 12- to 16-ounce glass with ice. Pour 1/4 cup lemon juice and 1/3 cup syrup over ice, top with club soda. Garnish with cherries and mint.

Leftover syrup may be stored, refrigerated, up to one week. Makes 4 servings.

Fresh Cherry Picnic Salad

FROM THE NORTHWEST CHERRY GROWERS, NWCHERRIES.COM

- 1 cup sugar snap peas
- 2 cups pitted Northwest fresh sweet cherries
- 1 medium cucumber, halved, seeded and sliced 1/2-inch thick
- 1 cup red radishes, cut into wedge-shaped pieces
- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Balsamic vinegar
- 3/4 teaspoon sesame oil
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon each toasted sesame seeds and grated fresh ginger root
- 1/8 teaspoon ground pepper

Blanch peas in boiling salted water 1 minute; plunge into iced water to cool. Drain.

Mix cherries, cucumber, radishes and peas. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well.

Pour over cherry mixture and toss to coat. Marinate, refrigerated, at least 1 hour.

Makes 4-6 servings.



Fish Tacos with Tart Cherry and Mango Salsa

FROM THE CHERRY MARKETING INSTITUTE, WWW.CHOOSUCHERRIES.COM

- Salsa:**
- 1 cup fresh or frozen Montmorency pitted tart cherries
- 1 mango, chopped
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1/2 jalapeño, seeded and minced
- 2 tablespoons minced cilantro
- 1 tablespoon agave nectar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- Tacos:**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 1-1/4 pounds white fish, like cod or mahi mahi
- 6 taco-sized tortillas, wheat or corn
- 6 tablespoons queso fresco (or feta cheese)

In a medium glass bowl, stir together cherries, mango, lime juice, jalapeño, cilantro, agave nectar and salt. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour to allow flavors to combine.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with foil and lightly coat with cooking spray.

In glass container, whisk together olive oil, lime juice, cumin, salt and pepper. Add fish, turning to coat with marinade. Let rest 15 minutes. Transfer fish to lined baking sheet. Discard marinade. Bake until fish is just cooked through, 8-10 minutes, depending on thickness of filets. Let fish rest until it is cool enough to handle, then flake with fingers or a fork.

Heat a nonstick skillet over medium heat. Heat each tortilla until warm, about 10 seconds per side. Divide fish, salsa and cheese evenly between tortillas. Serve.

Makes 6 tacos.



Cherry Almond Butter Power Cookies

FROM THE CHERRY MARKETING INSTITUTE, WWW.CHOOSUCHERRIES.COM

- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 ripe banana, mashed until smooth
- 1/3 cup chopped walnuts
- 1/4 cup dried Montmorency tart cherries
- 2 tablespoons raw pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- 2 tablespoons cacao nibs
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- 1/2 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 1/2 tablespoons creamy almond butter
- 1 tablespoon melted coconut oil
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch kosher salt

Preheat oven to 350°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl, mix together until well combined. Form mixture into disks either by hand or by using a biscuit cutter/circular cookie cutter, pressing mixture firmly into the mold to form.

Bake 15-18 minutes until golden brown around the edges and on the top. Remove from oven, let cool on the baking sheet. Store in an airtight container. Makes 6 cookies.

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