

## *Desserts II*

Spirited Creams  
Flavored Creams  
Black-top Creams  
Fools  
Special Creams

### *Spirited Creams*

Crème fraîche mixed with fruit-flavored spirits makes wonderful dessert creams. The spirits should be mixed with the crème fraîche at least 24 hours in advance and allowed to blend in the refrigerator. The raw alcohol will dissipate and the crème fraîche will become intensely aromatic. Paired with fresh fruit, it is like eating fruit in the middle of an orchard.

Poire William Cream  
Pears Poire William  
Amaretto Cream  
Apricot Cream on Toasted Pound Cake  
Mint Cream with Honeydew Melon  
Peaches with Peachtree Schnapps Cream

#### **POIRE WILLIAM CREAM**

SERVES 4

Poire William is French eau de vie with a pear in the bottle. There is an Italian version called “Pesener”. Both are excellent. There are also some sweetened pear liqueurs available. If you use these, reduce the amount of sugar added.

*1 cup crème fraîche*  
*1 tbs sugar*  
*2 tbs Poire William*

1. Add the sugar and Poire William to the crème fraîche. Mix well.
2. Place in the refrigerator overnight.
3. Just before serving, whip the crème fraîche mixture until stiff.
4. Serve in individual dessert dishes, alone or with fresh or poached pears.

#### **PEARS POIRE WILLIAM**

SERVES 4

*2 Bosc pears*  
*2 cups water*  
*1/2 cup sugar*  
*1 vanilla bean*  
*zest of half a lemon*  
*Poire William Cream (recipe just above)*  
*melted chocolate*

1. Peel, core, and halve the pears.
2. Place the pears in a saucepan with the water, sugar, vanilla bean and lemon zest. Cook over medium heat until the pears are tender but firm.
3. Remove the pears from the saucepan and allow to cool.
4. Mound an individual dessert dish with Poire William cream. Place half a poached pear, cut side down, in the center of the cream. Drizzle a small amount of chocolate over the pear and serve.

### **AMARETTO CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*1 tbs sugar*  
*2 tbs Amaretto*  
*1 tbs finely chopped almonds*

1. Add the sugar and Amaretto to the creme fraiche. Mix well.
2. Place in the refrigerator overnight.
3. Just before serving, whip the creme fraiche mixture until stiff.
4. Serve in individual dessert dishes, and sprinkle with chopped almonds.

### **APRICOT CREAM ON TOASTED POUND CAKE**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*1 tbs sugar*  
*2 tbs apricot schnapps*  
*4 ripe apricots*  
*2 cup water*  
*1/2 cup sugar*  
*4 slices pound cake, toasted*  
*powdered cloves*

1. Mix the sugar and apricot schnapps with the creme fraiche. Refrigerate overnight.
2. Next day, place the peeled and halved apricots in a saucepan with the water and sugar. Simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.
3. Toast the pound cake until golden brown.
4. Whip the creme fraiche mixture until stiff.
5. Place one slice of pound cake on a plate and top with two halves of an apricot arranged on the diagonal of the cake. Place one half with the cavity side up; the other down.
6. Spoon the whipped creme fraiche across the diagonal where the cake joins so that the apricots are visible.
7. Lightly sprinkle the creme fraiche mixture with powdered cloves. Arrange each plate thusly and serve.

### **MINT CREAM WITH HONEYDEW MELON**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*2 tbs creme de menthe, green*

*1 tbs sugar*  
*16 honeydew melon balls*

1. Add the creme de menthe and sugar to the creme fraiche. Mix well.
2. Refrigerate overnight to allow creme fraiche to absorb the flavor of the creme de menthe.
3. Just before serving, whip the creme mixture until stiff.
4. Divide the creme fraiche amongst four frosted, or clear, glass dessert dishes. Top each with four melon balls.

### **PEACHES WITH PEACHTREE SCHNAPPS CREAM**

SERVES 4

I use DeKuyper "Original Peachtree Schnapps" for this recipe.

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*1 tbs sugar*  
*2 tbs Peachtree Schnapps*  
*2 ripe peaches*

1. Add the sugar and schnapps to the creme fraiche. Mix well.
2. Refrigerate overnight.
3. Just before serving, whip the creme mixture until stiff.
4. Cut the peaches into bite-sized chunks and lightly mix with the whipped creme.
5. Serve in individual dessert dishes.

### *Flavored Creams*

Gingered Cream  
Lavender Cream  
Lemon Cream  
Maple Walnut Cream  
Orange Cream  
Brise d'Avril  
Strawberry Mont Blanc

### **GINGERED CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*1/2 tsp ground ginger*  
*1 tbs sugar*  
*1 tbs minced crystallized ginger*  
*mandarin orange sections for garnish*

1. Add the ground ginger, sugar, and minced crystallized ginger to the creme fraiche. Mix well.
2. Place in the refrigerator for 24 hours to allow flavors to blend.
3. Just before serving, whip the mixture until stiff.

4. Serve in individual dessert dishes. Garnish with orange sections.

### **LAVENDER CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*1 tbs lavender blossoms*  
*1 tbs sugar*  
*lavender blossoms for garnish*

1. Add the lavender blossoms and sugar to the creme fraiche. Mix well.
2. Refrigerate overnight.
3. Put the creme fraiche through a tea strainer to remove lavender.
4. Just before serving, whip the creme fraiche until stiff.
5. Serve in individual dessert dishes. Sprinkle a few lavender blossoms on each dish for garnish.

### **LEMON CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*juice of one-half lemon*  
*zest of one lemon, finely minced*  
*1 tbs sweetened condensed milk*  
*mint leaves for garnish*

1. Add the lemon juice, zest and sweetened condensed milk to the creme fraiche. Mix well.
2. Place in the refrigerator (preferably overnight) until ready to use.
3. Just before serving, whip creme mixture until stiff.
4. Serve in individual dessert dishes. Garnish with mint leaves.

### **MAPLE WALNUT CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*4 tbs maple syrup*  
*4 walnuts, finely chopped*

1. Add the maple syrup to the creme fraiche. Whip until stiff.
2. Add the finely chopped walnuts to creme fraiche mixture. Mix well.
3. Serve in individual dessert dishes. A small amount of finely chopped walnut may be sprinkled on top for garnish.

### **ORANGE CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*2 tbs orange concentrate (frozen)*  
*1 tbs sugar*

*zest of half an orange*

1. Add the orange concentrate, sugar and zest to the creme fraiche. Mix well.
2. Place in refrigerator until ready to use.
3. Just before serving, whip creme mixture until stiff.
4. Serve in individual dessert dishes.

### **BRISE D'AVRIL**

SERVES 4

This fanciful French recipe is bound to evoke spring.

*1 cup creme fraiche  
3 tbs superfine sugar  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
3 large strawberries, ground and sweetened  
candied violets*

1. Add the sugar and vanilla extract to the creme fraiche. Whip until stiff.
2. Fold in the ground strawberries; re-whip if necessary.
3. Using a pastry bag, fill small individual cups with the creme fraiche mixture.
4. Decorate with a few crystallized violets.

### **STRAWBERRY MONT BLANC**

SERVE 4

*Chantilly cream  
4 large strawberries  
4 small strawberries  
1 tbs blueberry preserves*

1. Cut up the large strawberries and mix with the blueberry preserves.
2. Prepare the Chantilly cream.
3. In four individual dessert dishes, place equal mounds of the strawberry-blueberry preserve mixture.
4. Completely cover each mound with Chantilly cream, piling the peak up irregularly like a mountaintop.
5. Decorate each dish with a small strawberry, hull on.

### *Black-Top Creams*

Chestnut Black-Top Cream  
Coffee Black-Top Cream  
Chocolate Lovers Black-Top Cream  
Banana Black-Top Cream  
Cranberry Black-Top Cream  
Lemon Black-Top Cream  
Peppermint Patty Black-Top Cream  
Poire William Black-Top Cream

Black-top creams are easy, unusual and elegant desserts. Simply flavor creme fraiche, chill it, whip it and top with a thin\* layer of melted chocolate. Let the black-top cream sit in a cool, dry place until the chocolate has firmed, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate until ready to serve. To eat, break through the chocolate with a spoon and eat the cream and chocolate together. The combinations are limited only by your imagination. I have included my favorites. I'm sure you will create many more.

\*Use bitter chocolate. Melt the chocolate. Add a very small amount of coconut cream (available in health food stores). Because of the difference in melting points, the coconut oil greatly reduces the viscosity of the chocolate. It also alters the flavor; so, add only a tiny amount of coconut oil.

### **CHESTNUT BLACK-TOP CREAM**

SERVES 4

*8 tbs creme fraiche*  
*8 tbs sweetened chestnut puree\**  
*1 oz chocolate, melted*  
*4 egg cups*

1. Place 2 tablespoons of chestnut puree in the bottom of each egg cup. Gently tap the cups so that the puree settles into the bottom of the cups.
2. Place 2 tablespoons of creme fraiche on the top of the chestnut puree.
3. Spoon 1 teaspoon of warm, melted chocolate onto the top of the creme fraiche; spread it with the back of a spoon to cover the top in a thin layer.
4. Allow chocolate to firm in a cool, dry place.
5. After the chocolate has firmed, cover each dessert with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

\*Sweetened chestnut puree (creme de marrons) is available at specialty food shops and many supermarkets in the gourmet section.

### **SWEETENED CHESTNUT PUREE**

If you are lucky enough to live in an area that has fresh chestnuts, you may make your own sweetened chestnut puree.

*2-1/2 lbs chestnuts*  
*milk*  
*1 tsp vanilla extract*  
*sugar*

1. Slit the chestnuts and cover with water. Boil for about 30 minutes. Drain, peel, and remove the brown inner skin.
2. Cover the chestnuts with milk in a saucepan. Add the vanilla and bring to boiling point. Cover and cook over low heat for about 45 minutes or until chestnuts are soft. Stir to prevent sticking.
3. Drain; puree the chestnuts in a food processor.
4. Measure the volume of the puree and add half that volume of sugar.
5. Place the chestnuts and sugar in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture becomes thick and pulls away from the sides of the pan. Cool and use in recipes calling for chestnut puree.

### **COFFEE BLACK-TOP CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*1 tbs instant coffee*  
*1 to 2 tbs sugar, to taste*  
*1 oz chocolate, melted*

1. Add the coffee and sugar to the creme fraiche. Mix well. Whip the mixture until stiff.
2. Place the creme fraiche mixture in individual dessert dishes. Egg cups work nicely. Smooth the top of the creme.
3. Spoon 1 teaspoon of warm, melted chocolate onto each dessert; spread it with the back of a spoon to cover the top in a thin layer.
4. Put desserts in a cool, dry place for 1 hour to allow the chocolate to firm.
5. After the chocolate has firmed, cover each dessert with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

### **CHOCOLATE LOVERS BLACK-TOP CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*2 oz chocolate, melted*  
*1 to 2 tbs sugar*  
*1/4 tsp instant coffee*

1. Set aside 4 teaspoons of the melted chocolate and keep warm.
2. Add the sugar and instant coffee to the creme fraiche. Whip until stiff.
3. To add the remaining chocolate to the creme fraiche, first equalize their temperatures by adding whipped creme fraiche to the chocolate a little at a time until the chocolate is cool, and then add all of it to the creme fraiche. Mix well. Add more sugar if desired.
4. Whip the chocolate-creme fraiche mixture until stiff.
5. Put the chocolate-creme fraiche mixture into individual dessert dishes; egg cups works nicely. Smooth their tops.
6. Spoon 1 teaspoon of warm, melted chocolate onto the top of each dessert; spread it with the back of a spoon to cover the top in a thin layer.
7. Put the desserts in a cool, dry place for 1 hour to allow the chocolate to firm.
8. After the chocolate has firmed, cover each dessert with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

### **BANANA BLACK-TOP CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*1/2 ripe banana*  
*2 tbs sugar*  
*1 oz chocolate, melted*

1. Mash the banana. Add the banana and sugar to the creme fraiche. Mix

well.

2. Whip the creme fraiche mixture until stiff.
3. Place the mixture in individual dessert cups; egg cups work nicely.
4. Spoon 1 teaspoon of warm, melted chocolate onto each dessert; spread it with the back of a spoon to cover the top in a thin layer.
5. Put the desserts in a cool, dry place for 1 hour to allow the chocolate to firm.
6. After the chocolate has firmed, cover each dessert with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

### **CRANBERRY BLACK-TOP CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*3 tbs whole cranberry sauce*  
*2 tbs sugar*  
*1 oz chocolate, melted*

1. Add the sugar to the creme fraiche and whip until stiff.
2. Add the cranberry sauce and mix until incorporated.
3. Place the mixture in individual dessert cups; egg cups work nicely.
4. Spoon 1 teaspoon of warm, melted chocolate onto each dessert; spread it with the back of a spoon to cover the top in a thin layer.
5. Allow chocolate to firm in a cool, dry place for 1 hour.
6. After the chocolate has firmed, cover each dessert with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

### **LEMON BLACK-TOP CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*juice of half a lemon*  
*1 tbs sweetened condensed milk*  
*zest of one lemon*  
*1 oz chocolate, melted*

1. Add the lemon juice, sweetened condensed milk and zest to the creme fraiche. Mix well. Whip the mixture until stiff.
2. Place the mixture in individual dessert cups; egg cups work nicely. Smooth the top of the creme.
3. Spoon 1 teaspoon of warm, melted chocolate onto each dessert; spread it with the back of a spoon to cover the top in a thin layer.
4. Put the desserts in a cool, dry place for 1 hour to allow the chocolate to firm.
5. After the chocolate has firmed, cover each dessert with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

### **PEPPERMINT PATTY BLACK-TOP CREAM**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*



*2 tbs creme de menthe, green*  
*1 tbs sugar*  
*1 oz chocolate, melted*

1. Add the creme de menthe and sugar to the creme fraiche. Refrigerate overnight to allow the creme fraiche to absorb the flavor of the creme de menthe.
2. Next day, whip the mixture until stiff.
3. Place the creme fraiche mixture into individual dessert dishes; egg cups work nicely. Smooth the top.
4. Spoon 1 teaspoon of warm, melted chocolate onto each dessert; spread it with the back of a spoon to cover the top in a thin layer.
5. Put the desserts in a cool, dry place for 1 hour to allow the chocolate to firm.
6. After the chocolate has firmed, cover each dessert with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

### **POIRE WILLIAM BLACK-TOP CREAM**

SERVES 4

Poire William is a French eau de vie with a pear in the bottle. Peseiner is the Italian version which is also very good. If you use a sweetened pear liqueur, adjust the sugar.

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*2 tbs Poire William*  
*1 tbs sugar*  
*1 oz chocolate, melted*

1. Add the Poire William and sugar to the creme fraiche. Mix well. Refrigerate overnight to allow the creme fraiche to absorb the flavor of Poire William and the alcohol to dissipate.
2. Next day, whip the mixture until stiff.
3. Place the whipped creme fraiche mixture into individual dessert dishes; egg cups work nicely. Smooth the top of the creme.
4. Spoon 1 teaspoon of warm, melted chocolate onto each dessert; spread it with the back of a spoon to cover the top in a thin layer.
5. Put the desserts in a cool, dry place for 1 hour to allow the chocolate to firm.
6. After the chocolate has firmed, cover each dessert with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve.

### *Fools*

Gooseberry-Raspberry Fool  
Warm Gooseberry Fool  
Strawberry Fool

Most of us are familiar with the fresh berry and cream dessert called “fools”. Its origin is said to be English because of their legendary fondness for gooseberry fools. But, according to Jane Grigson, its origin is more likely from

the French verb 'fouler', to crush. Whatever its origin, crushed, sweetened fruit served with creme fraiche is the diadem of fools.

I like to warm the fruit-sugar mixture and serve it over a mound of cold creme fraiche. I do not, as is customary, mix the two. The contrast of warm fruit and the cold, velvety denseness of creme fraiche is another dimension of pleasure.

Any good flavored fruit can be used in a fool. Most commercial fruit is devoid of flavor and isn't worth the creme fraiche. Look for tree-ripened fruit at farmers' markets or grow your own. High quality fruit preserves (those that use sucrose, not corn syrup) are also excellent.

### **GOOSEBERRY-RASPBERRY FOOL**

SERVES 4

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*1 cup canned gooseberries, in syrup*  
*1 lb raspberries*  
*sugar to taste*

1. Add the raspberries to the gooseberries. Add sugar to taste.
2. Heat in a saucepan until the sugar has dissolved.
3. Place a large mound (about 2 tablespoons) cold creme fraiche in each dessert bowl. Take care to keep the creme fraiche in a solid mass.
4. Spoon warm fruit over the creme fraiche. Serve at once.

### **WARM GOOSEBERRY FOOL**

SERVES 4

*1 16-oz can gooseberries in syrup*  
*sugar*  
*1 cup creme fraiche*

1. Add sugar, to taste, to the gooseberries.
2. Heat in a saucepan until the sugar is dissolved and the gooseberries are warm.
3. Place a large mound (about 2 tablespoons) creme fraiche in each dessert bowl. Take care to keep the creme fraiche in a solid mass.
4. Spoon warm fruit over the creme fraiche; serve at once.

### **STRAWBERRY FOOL**

SERVES 4

I have some misgivings about including a strawberry fool because commercial strawberries are so tasteless and disappointing. If you do not have a source of good strawberries, do not make this recipe.

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*8 to 10 strawberries*  
*6 to 8 tbs sugar, to taste*  
*4 heaped tsp brown sugar*

1. Using a fork or pastry blender, mash the strawberries with the white sugar.
2. Place 4 tablespoons of creme fraiche in each dessert dish.
3. Top the creme fraiche with 2 tablespoons of mashed strawberries. Swirl strawberries into the creme fraiche, but do not completely blend.
4. Top each dish with 1 heaped teaspoon brown sugar. Serve at once.

### *Special Creams*

Lemon Mascarpone  
 Chestnut Cream  
 Sadie's Sweet Double Cream  
 Creme Glace

### **LEMON MASCARPONE**

*6 oz mascarpone\**  
*juice of one lemon*  
*zest of one lemon, minced*

\*Creme Fraiche Mascarpone is in the Auxiliary Recipes.

1. Mix the juice and zest into the mascarpone. Allow to sit for an hour or two before using so that the flavors can blend.

### **CHESTNUT CREAM**

SERVES 4

Chestnuts and creme fraiche are a celestial conjunct.

*1 cup pureed chestnuts*  
*1/2 cup sugar*  
*2 tbs vanilla extract*  
*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*chocolate curls (optional)*

1. In a food processor mix together the chestnuts, sugar and vanilla extract.
2. Whip the creme fraiche until it forms stiff peaks.
3. Fold the chestnut puree into the whipped creme fraiche.
4. Serve in individual dessert dishes. Top with chocolate curls if desired.

### **SADIE'S SWEET DOUBLE CREAM**

This is my version of Devon double cream, a classic British double cream. Unlike creme fraiche, Devon cream is not cultured. Its distinctive quality is its flavor) sweet, with a hint of caramelized lactose. It is traditionally served with scones. I have found nothing to surpass this combination. Unfortunately, Devon cream is hard to find, frequently not fresh, and prohibitively expensive. The following recipe lets you turn your creme fraiche into a Devon-style cream that fools even a Briton.

*1 cup creme fraiche*  
*2 to 3 tbs sweetened condensed milk, to taste*  
*1 Junket rennet tablet\**

1. Mix the sweetened condensed milk into the creme fraiche.
2. Dissolve the rennet tablet in lukewarm water. Add to the creme fraiche mixture.
3. Place in a warm place (about 90 degrees F) for 30 to 45 minutes or until set.
4. Refrigerate until ready to use.

\*Rennet is available in most supermarkets.

## **CREME GLACE**

SERVES 4

This is one interpretation of creme brulee. I use creme fraiche instead of custard and superfine sugar instead of brown sugar. Superfine sugar gives a glass-like crust to the creme. Break through the crust with a spoon and enjoy the contrasting textures.

*2 cups creme fraiche*  
*8 generous tbs raspberry preserves or mashed, fresh raspberries*  
*4 souffle cups, 3 inch diameter*  
*superfine sugar*

1. Place 2 tablespoons of raspberries in the bottom of each souffle cup.
2. Cover with creme fraiche. Fill the cups to within half an inch from the rim. Each cup should take somewhat less than half a cup of creme fraiche.
3. Cover the top of the creme fraiche with an even layer of superfine sugar. Make the layer 1/4 inch thick. The sugar layer should be as thick as possible but you must leave some room so that the sugar will not boil over.
4. Place the souffle cups under a broiler, and let the sugar boil and bubble. Turn them (wear a glove) so that the sugar melts evenly. Let the sugar bubble until it starts to brown. Wearing a glove, remove the cups from the oven. Let the cups cool at room temperature.

Creme glace may be served at room temperature or cooled, covered, refrigerated and served cold. I prefer creme glace cold.