

Make It Sweet.

Cannoli

Growing up in the Northeast, cannoli were the sweet ending to many meals. They were available fresh from every bakery and many people would make their own. Not overly sweet, it is somewhere between a cheese course and dessert. I have a recipe here for the shells, homemade ricotta cheese, the filling and some sauces. It takes some time to make all of the components, but the end result is definitely worth it. Please support your local farmers and use fresh, farm raised ingredients whenever possible. The milk and cream we used was fresh from the farm as well as the strawberries, peaches, herbs, onions and jams. I love to shop at the farmers markets and use fresh, local ingredients. Hope you enjoy! ~Jennifer



Cannoli Shells

Ingredients

1 1/3 C flour
1 pinch of salt
2 Tbsp sugar
2 Tbsp shortening (or butter)
6 Tbsp white wine – approximately
2 egg whites – frothed
Vegetable Oil or shortening for frying

Special Equipment

Cannoli Tubes – usually lightweight aluminum, but some are wooden. They are usually 6” to 8” long and 1” in diameter.
Thermometer – this is really helpful for monitoring the oil temperature to be sure that you are frying at the optimal temp.
Pasta Roller – helpful but not necessary.
Deep Sauce Pan or Fryer – a deep sauce pan is for safety.

In a large bowl, stir to combine the flour, salt and sugar. Cut in the shortening using a pastry blender or a fork until fully incorporated. Add 4 tablespoons of wine (I use a Pinot Grigio) mixing at first with a fork and then kneading it in to make a dough. If the dough is too dry, add more wine a tablespoon at a time. Once the dough is finished, roll it into a ball and seal it in plastic wrap. Allow the dough to rest at room temperature for 1 to 3 hours. Once the dough has rested, pinch off a quarter of the dough to work with at a time. Roll the dough very thin. It can certainly be done with a rolling pin and elbow grease but, a pasta roller works great here – starting with the thickest setting and thinning the dough all the way to a #6 thickness. The dough should be rolled as thinly as possible using flour to keep it from sticking. Start heating the oil or shortening in a sauce or frying pan where the oil can be at least 4” deep. Heat the oil to 360° F. While the oil is heating, place the cannoli tubes into the oil for a minute to season them with the oil. Remove the tubes and drain on paper towels. Meanwhile, cut out 4” round circles from the rolled out dough. Roll the dough around the cooled cannoli tube. Brush egg white on the part that will overlap to seal the edge. Fry the cannoli a few at a time until golden brown using tongs to turn them over and around – approximately 2 minutes. Remove from oil and drain on paper towels. Use tongs to hold the shell and use paper towels to twist out the tube. Continue rolling and frying. The extra dough can be re-rolled without any problems. This recipe easily makes 36 cannoli shells. The fried and cooled shells can be saved up to 3 days stored in a Tupperware type container.

Homemade Ricotta Cheese

Ingredients

2 Quarts whole milk
1 C heavy cream
½ tsp salt
3 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

Special Equipment

Thermometer – this is essential for monitoring the milk temperature.
Cheese Cloth and Strainer – used to separate the curds and whey.

Pour milk and cream into a large sauce pan and heat over medium high heat, stirring every once in a while to prevent scorching on the bottom of the pan. Once the mixture reaches 200° F, remove from the heat, pour in the lemon juice and stir just to combine. Return the pot to the heat and bring the temp back up to 200 ° F. Remove from heat and let the pot sit undisturbed for 10 minutes. Prepare your strainer by placing the strainer in a large bowl where the strainer can sit high in the bowl. Line the strainer with 3 single layers of damp cheesecloth that extends over the sides of the strainer. After the 10 minutes, pour the contents of the whole pot through the strainer. Allow this to drain for about an hour. You will have a thick and delicious ricotta cheese that can be used in lots of recipes!. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Makes about 2 cups.

Cannoli Filling

Ingredients

4 C ricotta cheese (a little over 2 lbs.)
1 tsp vanilla bean paste (or vanilla extract)
1 ½ C powdered sugar
1 tsp freshly grated orange zest
½ C heavy cream beaten to soft peaks

Combine ricotta, vanilla, powdered sugar and orange zest and mix until well combined. Fold in whipped cream to lighten the mixture. The mixture should be stiff enough but not too stiff to pipe. Chill until ready to use. Using a pastry bag fitted with a very large round tip (Wilton 2A) or

star tip (Wilton 1M), fill the bag with the mixture. Pipe to fill one side of the shell and then pipe to fill the other side. This should be done as close to service as possible (a couple of hours is okay) since the shells will get soggy if they sit too long. Dust with powdered sugar. Dip ends in mini chocolate chips, chocolate vermicelli, sprinkles, chopped pistachios, etc. Serve with one of these great sauces. Makes enough filling for 36 cannoli.

Strawberry Basil Sauce

4 pints fresh strawberries
4 oz. strawberry jam
¼ C roughly chopped fresh basil
Sugar to taste

Clean and hull the strawberries. Combine all ingredients in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the blade. Process by pulsing and then processing until all ingredients are combined and smooth. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Extra sauce can be frozen. Makes 4 cups of sauce.

Peach Salsa

6 ripe peaches
2 Tbsp finely chopped red onion
1 Tbsp chopped fresh jalapeno (stem, ribs and seeds discarded)
Juice of 1 small lemon
1/2 Tbsp chopped fresh mint
1/2 Tbsp grated fresh ginger
1 pinch Kosher salt
1 heaping Tbsp peach preserves

Combine all ingredients into a bowl and stir to combine. Heat the peach preserves until melted. Pour over salsa and stir to combine. Allow the salsa to sit for at least 1 hour before serving to allow the flavors to meld. This salsa is great with the cannoli – but it can also be used with pork or just eaten with tortilla chips. Makes approximately 2 cups. Store in the refrigerator up to 3 days.