

If You Can't Stand the Heat...



Mélange of fruit purées with heavy cream.



Flight of fruit purées.

...step away from the stove, close the oven door and extinguish the grill...at least while you prepare the “cool” recipes in this summer month column. All that you will need is fresh fruit, a blender, and a few other ingredients that most home chefs have on hand.

The fruit purées below make a refreshing appetizer or dessert course, and I offer two presentations for these summer sweets. One is to spoon a portion of each purée into a shallow soup or pasta bowl — preferably, a simple, white bowl to showcase the fruits’ vibrant colors. The purées have a rather thin consistency, so make sure that the different colors do not run together. Drizzle heavy cream in a circular pattern over the purées, and use a knife to pull the cream out from the center in attractive rays.

Another option for serving these colorful treats is to spoon them into clear espresso glasses. Make the most of your herb garden by garnishing each purée with a different herb. I used basil for the kiwi, lavender for the cantaloupe and mint for the strawberry.

You do not need to adhere to the flavors below. Feel free to substitute your favorite summer fruits — cherries, apricots, plums, honeydew...’tis the season. Each of the below recipes makes approximately 2 1/2 cups of purée. Simply combine all ingredients in a blender until smooth, and remember to stir the purées before serving.

Cantaloupe Purée

1 cantaloupe, cut into small chunks
 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
 Pinch of sea salt
 Pinch of nutmeg

Strawberry Purée

1 quart strawberries, hulled
 Fresh lemon juice to taste
 Sugar to taste

Kiwi Purée

12 kiwi, peeled and cut into small chunks
 Fresh lemon juice to taste
 Sugar to taste

White Peach Purée

6 white peaches, peeled and cut into slices (If the peaches are not quite ripe, soften them by blanching.)
 Lemon juice to taste
 Sugar to taste

So, stay in the kitchen and start puréeing!

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