

# Richard Burr's Strawberry Fraisier Cake



Serves  
10-12

‘This has been a favourite of mine for years, as it makes such a striking centrepiece. I love a strawberry-pistachio combo, too. Nothing here is especially complicated; in fact, a lot of the time is spent waiting for things to cool, so you can get on with something else. So no excuses: if you see some nice strawberries when you’re out, get them and make a fraisier; the ‘effort-to-awesomeness’ ratio is certainly in your favour if you do.’

## You'll need

### For the crème pâtissière

- 300ml whole milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 large egg yolks (save 1 of the whites in a cup, and 2 in another cup)
- 25g cornflour
- 50g caster sugar
- 25g unsalted butter
- 150ml double cream

### For the marzipan

- 125g ground almonds
- 125g icing sugar, plus more to dust
- 1 egg white or 2 tbsp Two Chicks liquid egg white
- ½ tsp almond extract
- A few drops of pink gel food colour

### For the pistachio syrup

- 30g pistachios
- 50g caster sugar

### For the jelly

- 100g strawberries, hulled and chopped
- 25g caster sugar
- 1 sheet of gelatine

### For the decoration

- 50g white chocolate
- 150g strawberries, hulled and halved symmetrically down the middle

### For the pistachio sponge

- 4 large eggs
- 150g caster sugar
- 50g pistachios
- 50g cornflour
- 50g plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 50g unsalted butter

### Tool Kit

- Food processor
- 23cm springform cake tin
- Electric whisk
- Wire cooling rack
- Cake-cutting wire (optional)
- Pastry brush
- Piping bags
- Rolling pin
- Offset palette knife
- Serving plate or cake board

## Method

- 1.** To make the custard for the crème pâtissière, heat the milk with the vanilla extract in a saucepan. While the milk is heating, whisk the egg yolks, cornflour and sugar by hand in a bowl. Once the milk is hot (but not boiling) pour it over the egg yolk mixture, whisking continually. Once combined, pour this back into the saucepan and return to the hob over a low heat. Continue mixing until the custard has thickened, then remove from the heat. Melt the butter in a pan or in a microwave for about 45 seconds on full power. (Remember to cover the butter with something so it doesn't spit all over your microwave.) Fold this into the custard. Pour the custard into a bowl, place cling film directly on to the surface to stop a skin forming and put in the fridge to chill.
- 2.** Make the pistachio syrup by blitzing the pistachios in a food processor to a fine consistency. Mix them into the sugar and 100ml of water in a small saucepan. Heat until the syrup has reduced to a thicker consistency, and then pour through a sieve into a bowl and leave to cool.
- 3.** Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas mark 4. Line the base of a 23cm springform cake tin with baking parchment. Make the sponge by whisking the eggs and sugar in a bowl with an electric whisk until a light-coloured foam has formed (this should take about 5 minutes).
- 4.** Finely blitz the pistachios in the food processor and mix this with the flours and the baking powder in a separate bowl. Gently fold the egg and sugar mix into this. Melt the butter in a pan or in the microwave as above and fold this into the mixture. It will be much wetter than a regular sponge mix. Tip the batter into the prepared tin and bake for 25–30 minutes; it will be cooked when a cocktail stick stuck into the centre comes out dry. Put on a wire rack to cool. After 10 minutes, release the springform sides (you may need to free the edges with a knife first). Clean and dry the tin.
- 5.** Make the marzipan: put the ground almonds and icing sugar in a food processor and mix thoroughly. Add the egg white, almond extract and food colour and mix well until all the ingredients come together. If you don't want to use unpasteurised egg white, use Two Chicks instead; it's available in most supermarkets. When the marzipan has formed, wrap in cling film to prevent it drying out.
- 6.** To assemble, cut the cooled sponge in half using a cake-cutting wire or a long, sharp, serrated knife. Save the neatest half for the top. Line the clean springform tin with cling film and place one of the halves of sponge in the bottom. Brush some pistachio syrup on to the sponge. Take the halved strawberries and place them – cut side out – around the edge of the tin, with the tip facing up.
- 7.** Return to the crème pâtissière: whip the cream until it forms soft peaks and fold into the now-cooled custard. Load this into a piping bag and pipe on to the sponge, being careful not to get any on the cut sides of the strawberries or the finished effect won't look as sharp. The custard needs to come up as high as the tops of the strawberries. Smooth the custard out with an offset palette knife and place the second half of sponge on this. Brush on more pistachio syrup.
- 8.** Roll out the marzipan to around 5mm thick, using icing sugar rather than flour to dust the worktop. Lay the marzipan on top of the sponge and trim the edges. You can now gently press the cake down so the surface of the marzipan is about 5mm below the top edge of the springform tin. (This ensures the custard fills the cake, and makes room for the jelly layer.)

**9.** Make the jelly by cooking the strawberries gently with the caster sugar in a small pan. While this is heating, soak the gelatine in water to soften, then add to the strawberries and sugar. Mix thoroughly, then pour through a sieve on to the marzipan layer. Put the cake in the fridge for at least 1 hour for the jelly to set and the cake to firm up. Take the cake out of the fridge, release the springform sides and very gently take off the cling film (this is a bit fiddly, but it does come off eventually; take your time).

**10.** Melt the white chocolate for decoration in a heatproof bowl over a small saucepan of water over a medium-low heat (make sure the water doesn't touch the bowl). When the chocolate has melted, load it into a piping bag and cut a very small hole. Decorate the top of the cake with the white chocolate. Place on a serving plate or cake board.