Strawberry Cassata

By David Tanis | **YIELD 8 to 10 servings** | **TIME 1 1/2 hours, plus chilling**

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BATTER:

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, for preparing pan

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour, for preparing pan

6 large eggs, at room temperature

¾ cup/150 grams sugar

1 teaspoon grated lemon zest

Pinch of salt

½ teaspoon almond extract

1 ⅓ cups/200 grams sifted cake flour

FOR THE SYRUP:

½ cup sugar

Zest of 1 lemon, removed in large strips

2 tablespoons grappa or vodka

FOR THE FILLING:

2 cups/500 grams fresh ricotta

¼ cup/55 grams sugar, or more to taste

PREPARATION

Step 1

Bake the cake: Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour an 8-inch diameter springform pan and set aside.

Step 2

In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat eggs at medium speed. Add sugar, lemon zest, salt and almond extract and continue whisking for 10 to 15 minutes, until mixture is quite thick and nearly holds peaks. Fold in flour quickly.

Step 3

Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake for 25 minutes or until a skewer emerges dry when inserted in the middle of cake. Cool on a rack. (It's best to make the cake a day in advance.)

Step 4

Make the syrup: Simmer sugar, 1/2 cup water and the lemon zest over medium heat for 10 minutes. Cool, stir in grappa and set aside.

Step 5

Meanwhile, make the filling: Whisk together ricotta and sugar to a spreadable consistency.

Step 6

Slice cake into 4 thin layers. Put 1 layer on a cake platter. Paint generously with syrup and spread with a quarter of the ricotta filling. Repeat with remaining 3 layers, stacking as you go. Smooth top layer of ricotta cream.

FOR THE GARNISH:

½ pound/223 grams ripe strawberries, hulled and halved

1 tablespoon sugar

2 tablespoons lemon juice

Step 7

Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or up to 24 hours. Keep refrigerated until an hour before serving.

Step 8

To serve, toss berries with sugar and lemon juice. Let macerate no more than 10 minutes, then spoon berries over cake.

PRIVATE NOTES

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