

Toasted Coconut Panna Cotta with Fresh Strawberries

serves 8

This version hovers delightfully between a pudding and a panna cotta as it calls for less gelatin than the traditional version. Serve in ramekins, teacups or punch glasses rather than unmolding.

7 ounces (3 1/2 cups) unsweetened large flake coconut
3 13.5-ounce cans regular (not reduced fat) unsweetened coconut milk
1 1/2 cups heavy cream, divided
1 envelope (.25 ounce) powdered, unflavored gelatin
1/2 cup + 1 tablespoon granulated sugar, divided
pinch of kosher salt
1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
8 large fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced
1 lime, zested and halved

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Spread coconut evenly on a large baking sheet and place in oven. Toast for 5 - 10 minutes until light golden, watching carefully and stirring every couple of minutes to prevent burning. Remove from oven and set aside.

Place coconut milk in a large saucepan, including all of the cream solids lingering in the cans. Add toasted coconut to saucepan and bring to a low simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10-15 minutes while the mixture becomes fragrant and reduces.

While the coconut mixture is simmering, place 1/4 cup of the heavy cream in a small bowl. Sprinkle gelatin evenly over top of cream and allow to dissolve, 5 to 10 minutes. Stir with a fork, mashing it about to combine (mixture will be very thick), and set aside.

Place a fine mesh sieve into a large bowl and set aside. Using an immersion blender, purée the coconut mixture until coconut flakes have broken down into tiny bits. Alternatively, ladle into a standard blender and purée in batches, never filling blender more than half way to prevent the steamy liquid from blowing lid off. Pour puréed mixture through sieve to capture all of the solids, then press solids with the back of a spoon to squeeze out as much coconut milk as possible. You should have approximately 3 cups of toasted coconut milk.

Discard solids and wipe any remaining coconut from saucepan. Pour toasted coconut milk, remaining 1 and 1/4 cups cream, 1/2 cup granulated sugar, and salt into saucepan over medium heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. When sugar has completely dissolved, turn off heat and stir in gelatin mixture and vanilla until gelatin is fully incorporated.

Place eight ramekins, teacups, or punch cups onto a baking sheet lined with a clean damp towel to prevent cups from sliding. Ladle mixture equally into each cup, then chill in refrigerator for four hours or overnight.

30 minutes before serving, place sliced strawberries in a bowl, sprinkle with remaining tablespoon sugar and lime zest, then squeeze in juice of half a lime. Stir, then set aside at room temperature, allowing berries to macerate. Top each panna cotta cup with strawberry slices and a drizzle of the juices.

a *fletcher + fork* recipe