

Pain Perdue with Strawberry-Rhubarb Purée

4 slices French toast
8 oz (225 g) strawberry-rhubarb purée
4 scoops vanilla ice cream
8 oz (225 g) fresh strawberries, tops removed and sliced
2-3 tbsp (30-45 ml) sliced almonds, lightly toasted
4 tbsp (60 ml) Canadian birch or maple syrup
Maple or cinnamon sugar, for dusting (make cinnamon sugar by combining 2 parts icing sugar with 1 part cinnamon)
Garnishes: mint leaves, edible flowers

Strawberry-Rhubarb Purée:
¼ cup (65 ml) sugar
1 cup (500 ml) ¼-inch-thick (6 mm) slices rhubarb
½ cup (125 ml) strawberries, tops removed, quartered
Juice from ½ a lime

French Toast:
4 ½-inch-thick (12 mm) slices brioche or baguette
6 eggs
2 cups (500 ml) 3% milk
2 tbsp (30 ml) sugar
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise, or 1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla
1 tbsp (15 ml) unsalted butter, softened

Strawberry-Rhubarb Purée: Bring the sugar and rhubarb to a simmer in a non-reactive pot. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the strawberries and continue simmering for about 4 minutes, or until the strawberries break down. Remove from heat and let cool. Transfer to a blender and purée into a thick jam. Squeeze in the lime juice and stir. Set aside until ready to use. Can be made up to one day in advance.

French Toast: Whisk the eggs in a medium bowl. Whisk in the milk and sugar. Add the vanilla bean. Soak the bread slices in the mixture for a few minutes. Melt the butter in a frying pan on medium heat and sauté the bread slices on each side until golden brown.

To Assemble: This dish is improved when the plates have been warmed in advance. Place a slice of French toast on each plate. Spoon the purée on and around the toast. Top with the ice cream, sliced strawberries and almonds. Drizzle with the syrup. Dust with the maple or cinnamon sugar and garnish with mint or edible flowers.

Serves 4

Be sure to use fruit that is in season. Peaches work great as well. For vanilla-flavoured sugar, remove the vanilla bean from the French toast mixture and rinse and dry well, then place in a bowl of sugar.

Alternative garnish: Chantilly cream and a dusting of icing sugar.

