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## **STRAWBERRY HONEY BALSAMIC WITH BLACK PEPPER**

### **MAKES ABOUT 2 PINTS**

A scoop of strawberry ice cream doesn't taste much like strawberry, does it? Don't get me wrong, the classic flavor has its place, but once you've added enough fat to make ice cream properly creamy, you've obscured the bright qualities that makes the berry so loveable. In my world, evading the Strawberry Problem is a fun challenge, one that has spurred all sorts of solutions during the life of Salt & Straw. Perhaps our favorite is inspired by the Italian way of enjoying the fruit. By adding balsamic to reclaim its acidity and black pepper to play up its fruitiness, we re-create the texture and richness of the classic, just with more strawberry oomph.

**WHAT WE LEARN:** *Mixing in jams after churning is a great way to incorporate fruity flavors into ice cream. Jams are cool because they're cooked to make a concentrated version of the fruit and because their high sugar content means they never freeze, so each swirl delivers its flavor immediately—before the rich ice cream registers.*

- ¾ cup Strawberry Puree (recipe follows), very cold
- ¼ cup honey balsamic vinegar, [like Honey Ridge Farms or O Olive Oil](#)
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly (and very finely) ground black pepper
- 3 cups Ice Cream Base, very cold (*See recipe below*)
- ¾ cup your favorite strawberry jam

In a bowl, combine the strawberry puree, vinegar, and black pepper with the ice cream base. Whisk as needed to get everything completely incorporated into the base. Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker and turn on the machine. Churn just until it has the texture of soft-serve (see note below for timing ranges, depending on the machine).

Stir the jam with a fork to loosen it. Quickly alternate spooning layers of the mixture and dollops of the jam in freezer-friendly containers.

Cover with parchment paper, pressing it to the surface of the ice cream so it adheres, then cover with a lid. It's okay if the parchment hangs over the rim. Store it in the coldest part of your freezer (farthest from the door) until firm, at least 6 hours. It will keep for up to 3 months.

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## **STRAWBERRY PUREE**

### **MAKES ABOUT ¾ CUP**

10 ounces (about 1 pint) ripe strawberries, hulled and halved  
¼ cup honey

Heat the oven to 300°F. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper.

Spread the strawberries out evenly on the lined sheet pan and drizzle them with the honey. Bake for 15 minutes. Stir the berries and continue baking until they just barely begin to caramelize and get a little bit of roasted color to them, about 20 minutes more. Remove the sheet pan from the oven and let them sit until they're cool enough to handle. Transfer the berries to a blender along with the yummy sticky stuff on the parchment paper and puree to make a smooth sauce. Chill in the fridge until cold.

Store the puree in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or in the freezer for up to 3 months.

## **ICE CREAM BASE**

### **Makes About 3 Cups**

½ cup granulated sugar  
2 tablespoons dry milk powder  
¼ teaspoon xanthan gum (**See Note**)  
2 tablespoons light corn syrup  
1½ cups whole milk  
1½ cups heavy cream

Combine the sugar, dry milk, and xanthan gum in a small bowl and stir well.

Pour the corn syrup into a medium pot and stir in the whole milk. Add the sugar mixture and immediately whisk vigorously until smooth. Set the pot over medium heat and cook, stirring often and adjusting the heat if necessary to prevent a simmer, until the sugar has fully dissolved, about 3 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat.

Add the cream and whisk until fully combined. Transfer the mixture to an airtight container and refrigerate until well chilled, at least 6 hours, or for even better texture and flavor, 24 hours. Stir the base back together if it separates during the resting time. The base can be further stored in the fridge for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 3 months. (Just be sure to fully thaw the frozen base before using it.)

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### **Note: THE SECRET SUPERHERO OF ICE CREAM**

Every recipe in this book uses xanthan gum in its base. Now, I know what you're thinking (it's exactly what I thought when I first heard of it): "Xanthan gum" sounds funny. It starts with an "x"! It must be impossible to find and it must be bad. Well, it's not and it's not! It's easy to get, not just online but at most supermarkets. It's sold by ubiquitous brands like Bob's Red Mill and Hodgson Mill. Second, although that "x" makes it sound especially unnatural, xanthan gum is no stranger than cornstarch or baking soda.

Xanthan gum has one vital purpose at Salt & Straw: We use it to combat heat shock. To think about how, consider the effect that the more familiar gelatin has on water. Like xanthan gum, gelatin is a hydrocolloid. And as anyone who has made Jell-O knows, gelatin can halt the flow of water. While technically xanthan gum's actual effect on water is slightly different, the upshot is the same. It inhibits the mobility of the melted ice crystals (a.k.a. water) in ice cream, so the water has a harder time migrating to and refreezing onto those remaining crystals, making undesirable growth produced by heat shock less likely.

Some large companies use xanthan and other gums to mimic the texture of fat as well—so they can cut back on pricey cream—but the crutch comes with its own cost. Leaning too heavily on the stuff gives the product a gummy, teeth-coating texture that lingers on your palate a bit too long, like that guy at the party who hangs out after everyone else has gone home. Just the right amount of xanthan gum, on the other hand, is miraculous. At no cost to ice cream quality, you get insurance against ice crystal growth, bumpers in the bowling lane of perfection, a little leeway for when the world inevitably conspires against you. It's the lone ice cream-making decision at Salt & Straw that makes our lives easier, not harder. And being freed from that worry lets us be more daring on other fronts. My hope is that the freedom encourages you to make more ice cream! And while most homemade ice creams are best eaten within a few days, xanthan gum is one of the reasons why the ice creams in this book keep for three months!

## **CHURNING NOTES**

### **THE THREE TYPES OF ICE CREAM MAKERS**

I recommend a 1½-quart capacity machine for these recipes, though, as overloading a 1-quart machine can prevent your ice cream from freezing properly.

#### **HAND-CRANK**

**Churning Time:** Hand-crank machines will generally turn your liquid mixture to ice cream in 5 to 15 minutes, depending on your arm strength.

**Hot Cold Tip:** If you use a hand-crank device, try this: Rather than a mixture of ice and salt, use ice and an intense salt brine (a one-to-one salt-to-water ratio by volume). That gets things cooler quicker.

#### **FROZEN BOWL**

**Churning Time:** Frozen-bowl machines will generally turn your liquid mixture to ice cream in 20 to 30 minutes, provided that the mixture you use is already very cold from the fridge,

#### **INTERNAL COMPRESSOR**

**Churning Time:** Most machines with an internal compressor will turn your liquid mixture to ice cream in 30 to 40 minutes. Super-fancy ones will take 12 to 18 minutes.

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