

02/28/10 - Pluot Sorbet

On Monday, I went dutifully to Costco to stock up on staples for my home. You know trash bags, toilet paper, laundry soap, those annoying essentials that my husband thinks continually replenish by magic under the sink or in the cupboards.

Many times, I also buy fruit at Costco and onions and avocados. Monday they had large plastic containers of Pluots. Pluots are a combination of plum with apricot and the beautiful perfumed mottled rose colored fruit has an addictive taste distinct from other stone fruits. Pluots were also the main ingredient in a desert I tasted last summer at a restaurant in Chicago. You can read my review elsewhere.

I haven't stopped thinking about recreating that pluot sorbet. Last night inspiration hit and I dragged out my hereto fore unused new ice cream machine. I made the sugar syrup and halved the pluots. I put the syrup and pluots in the refrigerator because things freeze easily when they are already cold.

After dinner, I was too lazy to go look for the instructions for the ice cream machine so I winged it. I pureed some pluots in a blender. I added a tablespoon or so of blood orange (that I bought to try a sauce for chicken thighs) and as I was taking the blood oranges out of the refrigerator, I noticed a few strawberries wash and sliced waiting for someone to finish eating them. I added a few berries as well. I measured the pluot puree with the bit of blood orange and then added the sugar syrup. I poured all of this into the container for the ice cream, placed the dasher inside, and plugged it in. As I twisted the timer dial, OH! The dasher started to churn. Through an opening in a plastic cover, I sprinkled a few cut up strawberries.



After a few moments, the machine stopped churning. Is it done I wondered? No, of course not, I didn't have the top arm inserted correctly (sometimes you need to read those directions) so as soon as there was a little resistance in the sorbet as it started to freeze the arm popped up and caused the machine to stop. I fixed it and it continued churning once again.

After about 45 minutes, the sorbet was ready, I removed it from the machine and we ate some. The rest is for the freezer. The sorbet was a beautiful shade, sophisticated translucent pink, with bits of red strawberry visible here and there. Magnificent.

If you are wondering why I have started making sorbet in the dead of winter, I will explain. I love sorbet, all flavors. The machine has been sitting there since grandpa gave me a Williams Sonoma gift certificate for my birthday in December. Most importantly it is almost Passover or actually in one more month.

I am starting to prepare for Passover mentally. The preparations I go through are very elaborate and time consuming. In my home, we do a full spring cleaning. It's great, you find all kind of wonderful things you have forgotten about and are re-inspired. I make plans to use all frozen food from the freezers, use all rice, bread crumbs, and flour from the pantry. This is when you throw out all those half opened bottles of stuff in the refrigerator door. Spring is a time of renewal, so I like to start

fresh and since my kitchen is kosher, all food with leavening must be used up and cleared out. Along with these preparations, I plan the menu for the Seder or the celebration meal that the holiday commences with. I like to serve sorbet as the palate cleanser between the fish course and the main course. I think I will try several different flavors. I want to make raspberry, mango, more pluot and maybe chocolate to use in a layered frozen dessert.

Here is my basic sorbet formula

2 cups granulated sugar

2 cups water

2 cups of fruit puree, chilled

1 tablespoon lemon juice or orange juice

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup diced strawberries or other fruit

1 ice cream freezer, it could be all electric or the kind that you freeze the canister first.

Bring the two cups of sugar and water to boil in a sauce pan. Turn off the heat and let it cool down, then refrigerate the syrup.

Combine all the ingredients except the fruit chunks and put them in the canister of the ice cream machine. Place the canister in the machine and turn it on to process. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Once the sorbet is churned and frozen, serve it or freeze it.

If you don't have an ice cream maker, pour your sorbet mix into a flat wide bowl and place into the freezer. Every hour or so take it out and stir for a bit then place back in the freezer. The texture will not be as smooth as machine churned, but it will form a kind of granita.

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