

BARBECUE BERRY BRUSCHETTA

This is a twist on a savory appetizer, it's just fancy enough, and it's kid, as well as adult-friendly! The combination of sweet strawberries and the savory vinegar with basil might seem unusual, but trust me, they were made to be together!

Ingredients:

1 Pint strawberries
1/4 C balsamic vinegar
2-3 Tbs. Honey
Bunch of fresh basil
Pound cake (fresh or frozen)
Granulated sugar

Tools:

BBQ Grill
Torch
Oiled paper towel
Bamboo or metal skewers

First, soak bamboo skewers in water for 30 minutes, this prevents them from catching on fire. (Cause that would be bad.) Obviously this step is not necessary if you're using metal skewers. Using a paper towel, apply oil to the grill grate.

Chop up about 2 to 3 tablespoons basil in thin strips, or chiffonade as the fancy French say. Or use scissors.

Mix together 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar and 2 to 3 tablespoons of honey, depending on how sweet you like your desserts. Set aside.

On to the strawberries. Wash, remove stems, and thread strawberries onto skewers and place on oiled grill. If you use two sticks for each berry skewer, the strawberries won't spin while grilling. Cook over medium-low heat until the berries are heated through and soft and juicy, 5 to 10 minutes.

While the berries cook, cut pound cake into 1/2" slices and place on the oiled grill. Cook until lightly toasted, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove cake from grill and place on a heat-safe plate.

Sprinkle one side of each piece of cake with sugar, and – get out your torch! We're gonna Brulee it! Using the torch, caramelize the sugar until browned and melted. This adds a nice crunch to the cake, and ensures that it doesn't get soggy when the berry mixture is added.

When the berries are done, move to a cutting board and roughly chop them, then place in a serving bowl. Pour on vinegar and honey mixture, and sprinkle with basil. Place bruleed cakes on a serving platter, with the bowl of berries. Serve to guests with a spoon and enjoy!

BONUS CONTENT:

Strange as it might sound, strawberries have been served with balsamic vinegar since renaissance times in Italy. In a pinch, I've even served fresh berries with a drizzle of honey- balsamic over ice cream. Delicious and elegant. This dessert also works nicely with peaches and pineapple, but those fruits take a bit longer to cook.

The word bruschetta comes from the Roman dialect verb bruscare, meaning 'to roast over coals.' Brulee comes from the French brûler to burn. Pretty simple!