STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

SERVES 6

Active time: 35 min Start to finish: 1¼ hr (includes making biscuits)

Senior Food Editor: Kemp Minifie
Father: Tom Miles, Washington, D.C.
Strawberry shortcake was the culmination of my father's favorite June pastime—gathering strawberries at a U-pick farm. As a family we'd fan out across the field, each of us claiming a row, and we wouldn't leave until the trunk of the car was full. Although my father wasn't the cook in the family, he had definite ideas about how strawberry shortcake should be made.

- **2½ lb strawberries, trimmed and quartered (7½ cups)**
- **⅓ to ½ cup granulated sugar, or to taste**
- **1 cup chilled heavy cream**
- **¼ cup sour cream**
- **1½ to 2 tablespoons confectioners sugar**
- **½ teaspoon vanilla**
- **6 buttermilk biscuits (recipe follows)**

Special equipment: **a potato masher**

► Toss strawberries with granulated sugar in a large bowl and let stand 5 minutes. Gently press strawberries with potato masher to help release their juices, being careful not to crush them to a pulp. Let stand at room temperature, stirring occasionally, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

► Beat together heavy cream, sour cream, confectioners sugar (to taste), and vanilla in a bowl with an electric mixer at medium-high speed until it holds a soft shape (not stiff).

► Split biscuits horizontally with a fork and arrange 2 halves, split sides up, on each of 6 plates. Top with strawberries and juices, then with whipped cream.

BUTTERMILK BISCUITS

MAKES 6 BISCUITS

Active time: 15 min Start to finish: 40 min

- **1½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **1½ tablespoons sugar**
- **1½ teaspoons baking powder**
- **Rounded ¼ teaspoon salt**
- **¼ teaspoon baking soda**
- **½ stick (¼ cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes**
- **¾ cup well-shaken buttermilk**
- **1 tablespoon milk or cream for brushing biscuits**

► Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 425°F.

► Sift together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda onto a sheet of wax paper, then sift again into a bowl. Blend in butter with your fingertips until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add buttermilk and stir with a fork until a dough just forms (dough will be moist).

► Turn dough out onto a well-floured surface and knead gently 6 times. Pat out dough on a floured surface with floured hands, reflouring surface if necessary, into an 8- by 5½-inch rectangle. Trim all 4 sides with a knife, dusting knife edge with flour before each cut. Cut rectangle in half lengthwise, then into thirds crosswise to form 6 (2½-inch) squares, flouring knife between cuts. Transfer biscuits with a metal spatula to an ungreased baking sheet, arranging them 2 inches apart, and brush tops with milk or cream. Bake until pale golden, 12 to 15 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool to room temperature.

CAESAR SALAD

SERVES 6

Active time: 25 min Start to finish: 25 min

Food Editor: Shelley Wiseman
Father: John Wiseman, Somerset, England
When my father and stepmother moved from Mexico to England, my father started to help with the cooking. The first thing he learned to make was this Caesar salad.

- **1 large garlic clove, halved lengthwise**
- **¾ to 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **1 (3-oz) Portuguese roll or a 7-inch piece of baguette, cut into ¾-inch cubes**
- **8 anchovy fillets packed in oil, drained**
- **1 large egg**
- **2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**
- **3 hearts of romaine (an 18-oz package), leaves separated but left whole**
- **1 oz finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (½ cup; see Tips, page 173)**

Special equipment: **a very large salad bowl (preferably wooden)**

► Season salad bowl by rubbing a cut half of garlic and 1 teaspoon oil onto bottom and side of bowl (reserve garlic).

► Heat ¾ cup oil with both halves of reserved garlic over moderately high heat, turning garlic until golden, 1 to 2 minutes, then discard garlic. Add bread cubes and sauté, turning occasionally, until golden on all sides, about 2 minutes. Transfer croutons to paper towels to drain. Pour oil through a small fine-mesh sieve into a heatproof measuring cup and add enough additional olive oil to total 6 tablespoons.

► Put anchovies in salad bowl and mash to a paste using 2 forks. Whisk in egg and lemon juice, then add reserved oil (warm or at room temperature) in a slow stream, whisking until emulsified. Add salt to taste.

► Add romaine leaves to dressing and toss to coat. Add croutons and toss briefly.

► Divide salad among 6 large plates, then sprinkle with cheese and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Cooks' notes:

- **The egg in this recipe is not cooked, which may be of concern if salmonella is a problem in your area.**
- **Although the croutons are best warm, they can be fried 1 hour ahead.**

For MORE RECIPES, see page 170.