



Photos: Bryce Zhang

GOING BANANAS

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Here's a great dessert that I loved as a kid. All the components for it can be made ahead; in fact, the crêpes must be assembled and frozen before serving. Banana Split is a Kiwi classic, containing many ingredients we love – chocolate, cream, cherries and banana.

The banana is a great and versatile fruit. It contains three kinds of sugar – sucrose, fructose and glucose – combined with fibre. Bananas give an almost instant, sustained boost of energy. Just two bananas provides enough energy for a strenuous 90 minute workout.

But energy isn't the only way a banana can help us keep fit; it can also help to overcome depression, anaemia, blood pressure problems, brainpower, hangovers, heartburn and ulcers. If you have a mosquito bite, before reaching for the cream, try rubbing the affected area with a banana skin!

Bananas are native to the tropical region of South East Asia and are likely to have been first domesticated in Papua New Guinea. Today they are cultivated throughout the tropics. Banana fruit grow in hanging clusters up to 20 fruit to a tier and have between 3-20 tiers to a bunch and can weigh between 30-50kg. Although there are approximately 300 species of bananas, only 20 varieties are commercially cultivated.

One of the best things about this dessert is that it's perfect for dinner parties, as all the prep is done beforehand and will only take seconds to assemble, allowing you to spend more time with your guests.

UNTRADITIONAL BANANA SPLIT

Ingredients

Crêpe banana filling
6 large bananas, peeled
4 cups cream
½ vanilla bean, split (or vanilla essence if you don't have vanilla pods)
Pinch of salt

White chocolate, finely chopped
A few drops of lemon juice

Method

Place the peeled and chopped bananas in a stainless steel pot with the cream, vanilla pod and seeds and pinch of salt. Gently poach. The bananas should be soft but not mushy. Strain the bananas and keep the infused cream for another use (banana ice cream or custard).

The best way to make the filling is to weigh the banana purée and combine it with half its weight in white chocolate.

Note: it's very important that the purée and the chocolate are the same temperature when they are combined. Then place in a food processor and pulse until smooth. Add lemon juice. Process until combined. Refrigerate the purée for up to 24 hours to firm.

Trent Warren, chef at The Beach House Restaurant, Waipu Cove, has a variation on a classic Kiwi dessert - the banana split

CRÊPES

Ingredients

125g plain flour
15g caster sugar
Pinch of salt
2 eggs
325ml milk
100ml double cream
A few drops of vanilla and a little grated zest of lemon

Method

To make the batter put the flour, sugar and salt in a bowl. Add the eggs, mix well with a whisk, then stir in 100mls milk. To make a smooth batter, gradually stir in the rest of the milk and add the cream. Allow it to rest for 1 hour.

When ready to cook the crêpes, give the batter a stir then add vanilla and lemon zest. When you make the crêpes be sure to allow them to brown and spot slightly to give them the look of a banana peel. If you are short on time you can always buy crêpes.

CHOCOLATE SAUCE

Ingredients

8 ounces dark chocolate
1 cup cream
1Tsp corn syrup

Method

Bring the cream and corn syrup to the boil. Pour over the chocolate, allow to sit for a few minutes to melt the chocolate, then stir until smooth.

PLATING UP

When all components are ready, pipe the banana mousse into the crêpes and roll. Place the rolled crêpes in clingfilm and tie the ends off like a Christmas cracker. Place in the fridge to set, or into the freezer for later use.

When ready to serve slice off the ends and unwrap, cut into even portions, and place on top of the chocolate sauce. Then garnish with ice cream and fresh cream.

In the restaurant I garnish this Banana Split with home made vanilla bean ice cream, toshie cherries, cherry marshmallow and fresh cream. Devour and enjoy! ■

Portobello Restaurant



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