



Strawberry Balsamic Crostini with Whipped Cashew Cheese

What's not to love about fresh strawberries? They can be used in both sweet or savory as this recipe demonstrates. This makes the perfect summery crostini to serve as an appetizer or small bite at your next brunch or party!

Ingredients

Balsamic Strawberries

1 pound strawberries, hulled and diced
1 tablespoon good quality balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon honey
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

WHIPPED RICOTTA

1 cup part skim or whole milk ricotta

2 tablespoons low fat milk, half and half or cream
1/2 teaspoon lemon zest
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Ingredients for cashew cream

1 cup raw cashews, soaked in water, 3-24 hours
1/2 teaspoon salt
2-4 tablespoons water
1-2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar

optional additions: nutritional yeast, smoked paprika, granulated garlic, fresh herbs (basil, cilantro parsley, cilantro, dill, etc.) or dried herbs (oregano, thyme, rosemary). Start conservatively, add more to taste.

Instructions for cashew cream

Soak Cashews in water for 3 hours (or up to 24 hours refrigerated). Drain the cashews, saving the water.

Place the cashews in a food processor with the salt and vinegar and pulse repeatedly. Scrape down the sides and continue blending, repeating if necessary.

Add the cashew water, with the motor running, a tablespoon at a time to get the desired consistency. I typically add 3-4 tablespoons. Then blend for 1-2 minutes.

Taste and feel free to add any optional additions.

For a smoky flavor add 1/4 -1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika.

Other Ingredients

1 baguette, sliced and toasted until golden brown

1 tablespoon thinly sliced fresh basil leaves

Instructions

In a large bowl gently stir together all of the ingredients for the balsamic strawberries then set aside and let them macerate while you prepare everything else.

In a blender or food processor add the ingredients for the whipped ricotta and process until smooth and light.

Broil the slices of baguette until golden brown then spread on some of the whipped cashew cheese and top with the balsamic strawberries and a few pieces of sliced basil.

Serve immediately.