

## Balsamic Strawberries with Mascarpone Cream

Serves 6

### Ingredients

#### Macerated Strawberries

- 900 g fresh strawberries, hulled and halved
- 2 T sugar (adjust to sweetness)
- 2–3 tsp aged balsamic vinegar (Giusti recommended)
- Freshly cracked black pepper, 3–4 turns
- Pinch salt

#### Mascarpone Cream

- 250 g mascarpone
- 120 ml heavy cream
- 2 T powdered sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp lemon zest (optional)

#### Optional Garnish

- Toasted sliced almonds
- Fresh mint leaves
- Additional drops of balsamic for plating

### Instructions

1. Combine **strawberries**, **sugar** and **pinch salt**. **Rest 20 minutes at room temperature**.
2. Add **balsamic** and **black pepper**. Taste and adjust lightly.
3. **Chill 30–60 minutes before serving**.
4. Whisk **mascarpone** until smooth.
5. Whip **cream** to soft peaks separately.
6. Fold whipped cream into mascarpone gently.
7. Add **powdered sugar**, **vanilla** and **lemon zest**. Chill until service.
8. To serve: Spoon mascarpone cream into shallow bowl.
9. Top with strawberries and juices.
10. Add **3–4 small drops** of aged **balsamic** per plate.
11. Finish with **almonds** or **mint** if desired.

### Serving Tips

- Use balsamic sparingly — it should whisper, not dominate.
- Do not reduce high-quality balsamic over heat.
- A final crack of black pepper enhances strawberry aroma.

