The sweet, plump and juicy Louisiana strawberry is a delicious low calorie addition to any diet. One whole cup of fresh strawberries has only 55 calories. Properly frozen, Louisiana strawberries will retain as much viatmin C as fresh berries, allowing the consumer to enjoy Louisiana strawberries and strawberry dishes long after the season ends.

STRAWBERRY PRESERVES

2 pints strawberries
4 cups sugar

Wash berries in cold water. Remove caps and place berries in colander. Pour boiling water over berries. Immediately put drained berries in a deep heavy pot. Add 2 cups sugar. Stir gently and bring slowly to a full rolling boil (a boil that cannot be stirred down). BOIL 4 MINUTES. Turn off heat, add remaining 2 cups sugar. Shake pot or stir gently to dissolve sugar. Bring again to a full rolling boil and boil 3 minutes. Skim with a metal spoon. Cover and leave at room temperature for 12 to 24 hours to plump.

Carefully place whole berry preserves in hot sterilized jars, packing tightly. Fill with syrup, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Wipe sealing edge of jar with a clean damp cloth. Place scalded lid on jar and screw band firmly. Process in boiling water bath at simmering temperature (180 dgreees) for 20 minutes. Remove from water. Cool. DO NOT TRY DOUBLING THIS RECIPE. FOLLOW TIMING DIRECTION CAREFULLY ... DON'T OVERCOOK

FRESH STRAWBERRY MILKSHAKE

1 1/2 cups strawberries
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 cup vanilla ice cream
1 tablespoon honey

Combine all ingredients in container of electric blender; process until smooth.

This public document was published at a total cost of $2,000.00. Fifty thousand copies of this public document were published in this first printing at a cost of $2,000.00. This document was printed for the Department of Agriculture & Forestry, Office of Marketing, P.O. Box 3334, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821-3334 for the purpose of disseminating agricultural information under the authority of R.S. 3:401. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 31:43.

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The Louisiana Strawberry Marketing Board, P.O. Box 3334, Baton Rouge, LA. 70821-3334, (504) 922-1280.

Buy Louisiana!

STRAWBERRIES
STRAWBERRIES
STRAWBERRIES

TODAY'S INDUSTRY

The Louisiana strawberry season normally ranges from March through early May with the majority of berries being produced in late March to mid-April. The majority of acreage used for strawberry cultivation is located in Tangipahoa and Livingston Parishes. There are approximately 1100 acres of strawberries cultivated and under production. Yields in Louisiana averages 1600 flats per acre with a gross farm value of $12 million.

Producing strawberries is not a simple operation. To be successful one must select the proper varieties; use insect and disease free plants; control insects, diseases and weeds; fertilize, plant and harvest properly; and have adequate irrigation and frost control systems. In addition, harvesting and handling is very important in producing luscious "Louisiana" strawberries.

AVAILABILITY

Primary market competition for Louisiana berries originates with Florida and California berries. Florida strawberries are considered "early" and are in production from January to March. The Florida season is generally well under way when Louisiana begins to ship. Since the "first berries of the season" command the highest price, in a normal year, the Florida berries tend to keep prices relatively low.

Strawberry yields vary considerably from state to state. California has the greatest production of any state. This is a result of their extended harvest season of nine months due to their cool climate. Florida is second in the nation with a harvest season of three months. Most other producing states have a two month harvest season.

SELECTING

Choose firm, ripe strawberries with a good red color and bright green caps. They should be plump, well-rounded berries with a natural shine. Use the strawberries soon after purchase, preferably within three days.

HOW MUCH TO BUY

- 2 pints equals 3 cups capped berries or 4-5 servings
- 2 pints equals 2 cups crushed fruit
- 2 pints equals 3 cups preserves
- 12 basket flat equals 9-10 pints frozen

STORING

Remove strawberries from carton and sort out damaged berries. Do not wash berries until ready to use. Arrange strawberries in a single layer in shallow pan, cover lightly and refrigerate. Refrigeration keeps strawberries fresh and bright red in color.

When ready to use or freeze, wash gently and quickly in cold water. Lift berries from the water. Repeat two or three times until water is clean. Drain and remove the caps from the berries. Strawberries are now ready to be used fresh or for freezing.

FREEZING STRAWBERRIES

To freeze with sugar: Use one cup of sugar to four or five cups of berries. Add one teaspoon of commercial ascorbic acid mixture to each cup of sugar. This will help berries keep their bright red color and retain their vitamin C. Sprinkle sugar over berries. Lift berries gently with spatula or large spoon until all are coated with sugar and juice. Pack berries in moisture-vapor-proof containers or bags. Freeze immediately at 0 degrees F.

To freeze without sugar: Strawberries may be frozen without sugar; however, the quality of the product will be impaired. Flavor, color and texture will suffer. To freeze without sugar, place washed, hulled berries on a cookie sheet. Cover lightly and freeze quickly until firm. Remove immediately from pan and package in airtight, moisture-vapor-proof containers or bags.

NUTRITION

Fresh Louisiana strawberries are an excellent source of vitamin C. Ten large strawberries contain more vitamin C than a small orange.

STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM

- 1 quart fresh strawberries, hulled
- 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/3 cup kirsch or other cherry-flavored brandy
- 1 cup whipping cream

Combine strawberries, brown sugar and kirsch; mix gently. Cover and chill overnight. Drain berries, reserving 3 tablespoons liquid. Beat whipping cream until foamy; then gradually add reserved liquid, beating until soft peaks form. Top each serving of strawberries with a dollop of whipped cream mixture. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

STRAWBERRY PIE

- 1 9-inch baked pie shell
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 cup water
- Dash salt
- 3 ounce package strawberry Jello
- 1 1/2 pints halved strawberries
- 1 1/2 cups sugar

Cook sugar, water, cornstarch and salt until clear and thick. Stir in strawberry Jello. Set aside to cool. When cool, pour half of mixture into cooled pie shell. Add strawberries that have been mixed with 1/2 cup sugar. Layer remaining mixture on top of pie. Refrigerate until set. Serve with whipped cream on top.

FROZEN STRAWBERRY DELIGHT

- 4 cups strawberries
- 1 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 8 1/4 ounce can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 8 ounce container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 1/4 cup lemon juice

Puree strawberries in container of electric blender; set aside Combine condensed milk and whipped topping; stir unti well blended. Stir in strawberry puree, pineapple and lemon juice. Spoon mixture into a 13 X 9 X 2 inch pan; freeze until firm. Let stand at room temperature 15 minutes before serving. Yield: 10 to 12 servings.