

Introducing Suzy the Strawberry

It's June and that means it's a perfect time to introduce our next fruit Suzy the strawberry.



Hi I'm Suzy the strawberry, welcome to my patch! Let me tell you a little about me and my big family! - We're red, plump and heart shaped. In the supermarket you'll often see a cluster of us around a green fruit stem.

Availability

Our peak time is during the summer months and that's when you'll find the juiciest strawberries!

Did you know?

- We grow on a plant called a 'fragaria' which is a member of the rose family! If you walk by a strawberry bush you'll notice we give off a lovely sweet scent as we grow.
- We are actually not a berry, even though our name suggests otherwise. True berries have seeds on the inside, while strawberries have yellow seeds on the outside. Most strawberries have about 200 seeds!
- Many years ago people used to think strawberries could heal sunburn!
- There is a museum in Belgium just for strawberries; it's called "Le Musee de la Fraise".

Why are strawberries so good to eat?

We're an excellent source of vitamin C. The small seeds on our skin are a great source of dietary fibre – just be careful they don't get stuck in your teeth! We're also a good source of folate. We are mostly water but our natural sweetness comes from the sugars fructose and glucose.

How are strawberries grown?

Strawberries survive in a range of conditions and we will grow happily in most places around the world. The great news is that we can be grown in Ireland – why not try growing us yourself?

Strawberry plants like mild conditions and do not like extremes of hot or cold. They are versatile and will grow in most soils. The strawberry plant is dormant (sleeps) during the winter and this is generally the best time to plant us as it gives our roots plenty of time to grow before spring.

We grow on a small plant with a crown of dark green leaves. The plant also contains pretty white flowers which when fertilised by bees form the strawberry fruit.

We are handpicked because we all ripen at different times. We are also very delicate and bruise easily – ouch!

How to store strawberries

Remove us from the punnet. Place us in a single layer on a paper towel on a plate, cover and refrigerate. Use within 3 days. Do not rinse strawberries until you're ready to eat them as this will make us spoil quicker. For best flavour serve us at room temperature.

Fun ways to prepare and eat strawberries

When you're ready to eat us wash and remove our green stem on top. We're normally eaten raw and can be added to salads, sorbets, cakes, pancakes, waffles and over breakfast cereals. If you cook us we can be added to stewed fruits or made into jam.

Recipes

Strawberry Crush ice cream (0 exchanges)

Ingredients:

- 400 ml of low protein milk
- 250 g **unsalted** butter
- 6 heaped teaspoons (30 g approx.) of cornflour
- 2 x cans (400 g) of tinned strawberries in syrup
- 90 g of caster sugar
- 25 mls of lemon juice

Step 1 – Make the ‘cream’

- Place the low protein milk, butter and cornflour into a small saucepan
- Place over a gentle heat and stir well until the mixture starts to simmer and is thickened.
- Take off the heat
- Then pour into a tall container and use the hand blender to blend for 30-40 seconds.
- Leave to cool
- Cover and place in the fridge to chill for 3-4 hours, preferably overnight.
- When chilled, the cream mixture will softly set (almost like a jelly consistency).

Step 2 – ‘Add Suzy the strawberry and her friends’

- Using a sieve drain the strawberries and discard the juice. Make sure they are well-drained.
- Put the chilled cream mixture (from step 1) into a bowl and use an electric hand held mixer to whip the cream for 2-3 minutes until it is thickened, light and airy.
- Put the drained strawberries into a bowl and crush them with a large fork to break into smaller pieces.
- Add the crushed strawberries, sugar and lemon juice to the whipped cream and use the electric hand help mixer to mix for a further 1-2 minutes.

- Taste the mixture to see if more lemon or sugar is needed.
- Pour the large mixture into a large plastic freezer-proof container and put in the freezer for about an hour or until it is beginning to go firm around the edges. Take a strong fork or wire whisk and lightly beat the ice cream to break up the ice crystals.
- Put the ice-cream back in the freeze and refreeze for at least 3 hours.

Step 3 – Taste and **enjoy!** Penny and Paul like to enjoy their low-protein ice-cream on hot summer days to cool down!

Best bit -

We're naturally low in protein and can make up a delicious part of your diet – so what are you waiting for give me a try.

How many times did you try it? _____.

Did you earn your star? ★

