



Summer Berry Trifle

From *America's Test Kitchen* Season 14: Summertime Desserts

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

Trifles usually look a lot better than they taste because busy cooks simplify the complicated preparation by subbing in pre-made or instant components. In this recipe, we streamline the components so that the entire trifle can be made from scratch in just a few hours. We added a little extra flour to a classic chiffon cake so we could bake it in an 18x13-inch sheet, which bakes and cools much more quickly than the traditional tall chiffon cake, and we prevented our pastry cream from turning runny during assembly by adding 25% more cornstarch than other recipes. Rather than leaving all our berries whole, we mashed 1/3 of them so their juices would help the trifle components meld. A bit of cream sherry, mixed into the whipped cream and drizzled on each layer of cake, pulls the dessert together.

Serves 12 to 16

For the best texture, this trifle should be assembled at least 6 hours before serving. Use a glass bowl with at least a 3 1/2-quart capacity; straight sides are preferable. For a substitute for cream sherry, see related content.

INGREDIENTS

PASTRY CREAM

- 3 1/2** cups whole milk
- 1** cup (7 ounces) sugar
- 6** tablespoons cornstarch
- Pinch salt
- 5** large egg yolks (reserve whites for cake)
- 4** tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces and chilled
- 4** teaspoons vanilla extract

CAKE

- 1 1/3** cups (5 1/3 ounces) cake flour
- 3/4** cup (5 1/4 ounces) sugar
- 1 1/2** teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4** teaspoon salt
- 1/3** cup vegetable oil
- 1/4** cup water
- 1** large egg
- 2** teaspoons vanilla extract

FRUIT FILLING (made from pastry cream)

- 1 1/2** pounds strawberries, hulled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (4 cups), reserving 3 halved for garnish
- 12** ounces (2 1/3 cups) blackberries, large berries halved crosswise, reserving 3 whole for garnish
- 12** ounces (2 1/3 cups) raspberries, reserving 3 for garnish
- 1/4** cup (1 3/4 ounces) sugar
- 1/2** teaspoon cornstarch
- Pinch salt

WHIPPED CREAM

- 1** cup heavy cream
- 1** tablespoon sugar
- 1** tablespoon plus 1/2 cup cream sherry

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. FOR THE PASTRY CREAM:** Heat 3 cups milk in medium saucepan over medium heat until just simmering. Meanwhile, whisk sugar, cornstarch, and salt together in medium bowl. Whisk remaining 1/2 cup milk and egg yolks into sugar mixture until smooth. Remove milk from heat and, whisking constantly, slowly add 1 cup to sugar mixture to temper. Whisking constantly, return tempered sugar mixture to milk in saucepan.
- 2.** Return saucepan to medium heat and cook, whisking constantly, until mixture is very thick and bubbles burst on surface, 4 to 7 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat; whisk in butter and vanilla until butter is melted and incorporated. Strain pastry cream through fine-mesh strainer set over medium bowl. Press lightly greased parchment paper directly on surface and refrigerate until set, at least 2 hours or up to 24 hours.
- 3. FOR THE CAKE:** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease 18 by 13-inch rimmed baking sheet, line with parchment, and lightly grease parchment. Whisk flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt together in medium bowl. Whisk oil, water, egg, and vanilla into flour mixture until smooth batter forms.
- 4.** Using stand mixer fitted with whisk, whip reserved egg whites and cream of tartar on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium-high and whip until soft peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer one-third of whipped egg whites to batter; whisk gently until mixture is lightened. Using rubber spatula, gently fold remaining egg whites into batter.
- 5.** Pour batter into prepared sheet; spread evenly. Bake until top is golden brown and cake springs back when pressed lightly in center, 13 to 16 minutes.
- 6.** Transfer cake to wire rack; let cool for 5 minutes. Run knife around edge of sheet, then invert cake onto wire rack. Carefully remove parchment, then re-invert cake onto second wire rack. Let cool completely, at least 30 minutes.
- 7. FOR THE FRUIT FILLING:** Place 1 1/2 cups strawberries, 1 cup blackberries, 1 cup raspberries, sugar, cornstarch, and salt in medium saucepan. Place remaining berries in large bowl; set aside. Using potato masher, thoroughly mash berries in saucepan. Cook over medium heat until sugar is dissolved and mixture is thick and bubbling, 4 to 7 minutes. Pour over berries in bowl and stir to combine. Set aside.
- 8. FOR THE WHIPPED CREAM:** Using stand mixer fitted with whisk, whip cream, sugar, and 1 tablespoon sherry on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to high and whip until soft peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes.
- 9.** Trim 1/4 inch off each side of cake; discard trimmings. Using serrated knife, cut cake into 24 equal pieces (each piece about 2 1/2 inches square).
- 10.** Briefly whisk pastry cream until smooth. Spoon 3/4 cup pastry cream into trifle bowl; spread over bottom. Shingle

12 cake pieces, fallen domino-style, around bottom of trifle, placing 10 pieces against dish wall and 2 remaining pieces in center. Drizzle $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sherry evenly over cake. Spoon half of berry mixture evenly over cake, making sure to use half of liquid. Using back of spoon, spread half of remaining pastry cream over berries, then spread half of whipped cream over pastry cream (whipped cream layer will be thin). Repeat layering with remaining 12 cake pieces, sherry, berries, pastry cream, and whipped cream. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or up to 36 hours. Garnish top of trifle with reserved berries and serve.

TECHNIQUE

TECHNIQUE: LAYERING CAKE JUST RIGHT

Cutting and shingling the cake is the key to making it fit—and using every bit. First, slice the cake into 24 equal pieces and then shingle them (12 per layer), like fallen dominos, in the bowl.



TECHNIQUE

REFINING THE ELEMENTS

Here's how we tweaked three main components of our trifle so they all worked in tandem. The trifle is also prepared 6 to 36 hours in advance to give flavors and textures time to meld.

MAKE A STURDIER CAKE: An egg foam-based chiffon cake stands up better to a trifle's moisture than butter cake. By adding extra flour to it, we can bake it quickly in a rimmed baking sheet.



DEVELOP BERRY FLAVOR: We mash some of our berries. This allows the fruit juice—and therefore the flavor—to reach every bite of trifle.



STABILIZE THE CUSTARD: Adding extra cornstarch to the pastry cream keeps it from turning runny when spread between layers of cake.

