

Seasonal cook

# A taste of summer

Nothing says December like the colours and textures of berries, writes STEVE MANFREDI.

**T**his is the chilliest start to summer I've experienced in Australia – and I arrived as a six-year-old in 1961.

The Bureau of Meteorology confirmed that Sydney had the coldest first week of December since 1960. Apart from the weather, most other things to do with summer are on time. Mangoes are back, as are peaches, nectarines and some outstanding red-blushed apricots from Denmark.

And the berries in a large bowl on my kitchen table smell, taste and feel as though summer's promises will finally be fulfilled. The shiny colours of velvety raspberries, plump blackberries and youngberries look as stunning as a flower arrangement.

The easiest way to serve berries is with freshly whipped cream or some good vanilla ice-cream. With a little more work, you could add some berry sauce over the cream or ice-cream.

Puree one cup of berries with 30 grams of castor sugar. Pass through a sieve, pushing the puree with a spatula to get as much liquid as possible. Adjust sweetness by adding a little more sugar, or acidity by adding some lemon juice.

smanfredi@smh.com.au  
twitter.com/manfredistefano



Photo: Quentin Jones

## SUMMER BERRY PROFITEROLES

240g water  
100g unsalted butter  
Pinch salt  
½ tsp sugar  
145g unbleached baker's flour, sifted  
4 eggs  
50g good-quality dark chocolate, melted  
50ml pure cream, whipped  
150g mixed berries – raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, and boysenberries  
50ml vanilla custard

For the custard  
125ml cream  
125ml milk  
2 egg yolks  
45g castor sugar  
½ tsp vanilla essence

Heat water in a saucepan on moderate heat. Cut butter into small pieces and add to water with salt and sugar. Once boiling, add flour a little at a time and stir with a wooden spoon until it forms a paste. Continue stirring vigorously over heat for another minute. Place mixture in the bowl of an electric mixer with the paddle attachment and, on a low setting, beat to cool down to blood temperature. Crack one egg and add to mixture, adding the next egg only when

the previous one has been incorporated. Place mixture in a piping bag with a 5-millimetre nozzle and pipe a good tablespoon of mixture the width of a 50c piece repeatedly on a baking sheet covered with silicone paper. Leave a good 2-3 centimetres between each piping. Bake in an oven preheated to 180C for 20-25 minutes, depending on size. Remove and let cool on the tray.

For the custard, bring cream and milk almost to the boil. Cream egg yolks with castor sugar then add hot milk mixture, whisking well. Mix in vanilla essence then place in a double boiler or a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. Stir constantly until custard thickens and coats the back of a wooden spoon. Cool before using. Makes about 300 millilitres.

To melt chocolate, bring 1 cup of water to the boil in a small saucepan. Place chocolate in a stainless-steel bowl and place over saucepan. Remove from heat and let chocolate melt. Stir. To prepare profiteroles, cut each ball in half and fill with whipped cream and berries. Make stacks of 4 balls for each serving and spoon custard over the top, then finish with melted chocolate. Garnish with more berries.

**Makes about 40 profiteroles but any left over can be frozen.**  
**Wine** Italian or Australian sparkling moscato