

## Buttermilk Panna Cotta with Rhubarb-Strawberry Compote

6 servings

This silky vanilla-flavored Italian custard, which uses buttermilk for a slightly tangy flavor, is the perfect companion to a sweet and tart rhubarb and strawberry compote. The compote, in turn, is excellent as well with yogurt or ice cream.

Cristina Nastasi, a pastry cook at the Museum of Modern Art cafes, came up with the combination because there was plenty of rhubarb on hand and she had a free moment. For someone who's been baking ever since she can remember and whose e-mail moniker includes the word "sugar," making a new dessert is more fun than taking a break.

2 teaspoons unflavored gelatin  
1 cup heavy cream  
½ cup sugar  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 cups buttermilk  
Rhubarb-Strawberry Compote (recipe follows)

In a small bowl, sprinkle the gelatin over ½ cup of the cream. Let stand until softened, about 5 minutes.

Bring the remaining ½ cup cream, the sugar, and vanilla to a simmer in a saucepan over medium-high heat, whisking to dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat and let cool for 1 minute, then whisk in the cream-gelatin mixture until the gelatin dissolves. Stir in the buttermilk.

Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer into a large measuring cup. Divide the mixture among six 4-ounce ramekins or pour into a small serving bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 5 hours, until set. (Well-wrapped, the panna cotta will keep for up to 3 days in the refrigerator.)

Run a sharp knife around the edges of the ramekins and unmold the panna cotta onto plates, or serve it right in the ramekins or scoop out of the bowl. Top with the fruit compote.

Rhubarb-Strawberry Compote  
About 3 cups

½ cup sugar  
4 cups thinly sliced rhubarb  
2 cups quartered hulled strawberries  
Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.

Combine the sugar and ½ cup water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat.

Combine the rhubarb and sugar syrup in a 9-x-13-inch baking dish. Bake, uncovered, until the rhubarb is tender, about 15 minutes.

Add the strawberries, stir, and bake for 5 minutes longer, until the strawberries have softened. Let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate until ready to use. (The compote will keep, covered and refrigerated, for up to 1 week.)