

THE GLOBE AND MAIL 



Keith Froggett's goat cheese panna cotta

Fernando Morales/The Globe and Mail

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keith froggett

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Most people think of panna cotta, which in Italian means “cooked cream,” as a sweet, silky, chilled dessert. However, it can also be easily adapted to work as a savoury addition to salads or appetizers. Originally from the Alpine regions of northern Italy famous for their milk and cream, the early versions of panna cotta, prior to the 20th century at least, were quite unlikely to have included sugar anyway, as it was an expensive imported ingredient.

Panna cotta is ridiculously simple to make. The only thing that requires any attention is the amount of gelatin used. There is no greater sin than using too much of it, which always results in an over-firm, unpleasantly rubbery feel in the mouth.

The following recipe has been used on the menu at Scaramouche for a number of years, usually as part of a goat-cheese salad, but recently I used it at home as a tangy replacement for buffalo mozzarella in an heirloom-tomato salad. I substituted fresh lemon juice for the more commonly used balsamic vinegar and added slivers of picholine olives, which gave the whole salad a bright, citrusy edge.

Keith Froggett is co-owner and executive chef of Scaramouche in Toronto.

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 5 minutes

Ready in: 20 minute (Plus 4 hours of setting time)

Ingredients

2 cups 35-per-cent cream

2 sheets leaf gelatin

4 ounces Paillot de chèvre or similar goat cheese, rind removed

1 cup goat's-milk yogurt

A few drops vegetable oil

Method

Very lightly smear the insides of 6 half-cup (125-millilitre) ramekins with the vegetable oil. While heating the cream until just boiling, soften the gelatin in cold water. Drain the gelatin and squeeze it quickly in your hands to remove excess water. Stir the gelatin into the cream and remove the pot from the heat. Add the goat cheese and the yogurt. Using a hand-held blender, blend until smooth. Pour into the ramekins and refrigerate until set (at least 4 hours). Remove the panna cotta from the ramekins carefully before serving, setting the moulds briefly in hot water if necessary. Serve well chilled.

Wine Pairings

This is Jell-O for grownups, not that there's much wrong with Jell-O at any age. Your wine choice will depend on how you embellish this wobbly wonder, but sauvignon blanc should be given right of first refusal. It works beautifully with the panna cotta and the wine's acidity will stand up to heirloom tomatoes and a moderately acidic dressing.

Whatever you do, stick to something light, crisp and white. – Beppi Crosariol

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