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Early Summer Sunrise
Apricot Ice Cream on Snickerdoodles
Makes 12 sandwiches

Apricots herald the beginning of the stone fruit season. As I am crazy for them, I spun the golden orbs into both a sorbet (page 127) and an ice cream, planning to choose the better one for the book. I went back and forth, from tub to tub, spoonful after spoonful, trying to decide which to exclude. Those apricots held me in a hammerlock. There was no option but to include both. While the sorbet is bright, fresh, and tangy, this ice cream is round and lush. Spicy cinnamon atop the snickerdoodles warms the golden fruit like the late afternoon sun.

Apricot Ice Cream

1-1/2 pounds (680 g) ripe apricots (about 15 medium), pitted
1/2 cup (100 g) granulated sugar
2 tablespoons apricot preserves (optional)
1/2 cup (120 ml) crème fraîche, labne, or plain Greek-style yogurt
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1 cup (240 ml) heavy cream
3 tablespoons mild-flavored honey
1 tablespoon tapioca starch
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Cut the apricots into 1/2-inch (1-1/2-cm) chunks and put them into a medium saucepan. Stir in the sugar, preserves, if using, and 2 tablespoons of water. Stir over medium heat until the fruit softens about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the crème fraîche and lemon juice.

Puree with an immersion blender, or in a standard blender or food processor, until smooth. Strain through a fine-mesh strainer into a medium bowl, pressing on the solids to extract as much of the flavor as possible; discard the solids. Set aside.

Using the same saucepan, whisk the cream, honey, tapioca, and salt until no lumps remain. Heat the mixture over medium-high heat, stirring with a heatproof spatula, until it begins to steam and slightly bubble at the edges. Adjust to a simmer and cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens to the consistency of a cream sauce, about 90 seconds longer; do not fully boil. Whisk the thickened milk into the apricot mixture.

Set the bowl with the apricot mixture over a larger bowl of ice and water. Stir occasionally until the mixture is cool, taking care not to slosh water into the bowl. Cover and refrigerate until very cold, at least 2 hours. Transfer the bowl into the freezer for the last half hour before spinning it.

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Freeze the mixture in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's directions. When it is ready, transfer the ice cream to a chilled container. Cover and freeze until firm, at least 4 hours or overnight.

Snickerdoodles

1-1/3 cups (175 g) all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons plus 2/3 cup (160 g) granulated sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 cup (1 stick / 113 g) unsalted butter, softened
1 large egg, at room temperature

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C) with a rack in the center of the oven. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.

Whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt in a small bowl. Mix 2 tablespoons of the sugar with the cinnamon in a wide, shallow bowl. Set the bowls aside.

Mix the butter with the remaining 2/3 cup (134 g) sugar in a medium bowl using a wooden spoon until creamy. (Alternatively, use a handheld electric mixer or a stand mixer with the paddle attachment.) Add the egg until well mixed. Stir in the flour mixture just until no white streaks remain.

Spoon or scoop the dough by the tablespoonful to make 24 cookies, spacing them evenly on the baking sheet. Roll each scoop into a ball between your palms, then toss them in the sugar-cinnamon mixture 3 or 4 at a time to lightly coat them, returning them to the sheet as you go. Press the cookies with the bottom of a drinking glass to flatten them to about 2 inches (5 cm) in diameter – they will spread further as they bake (Moisten the glass bottom or spray it with nonstick pan spray if the dough sticks.)

Bake until the cookies are nearly firm to the touch but still a bit soft, about 12 minutes, rotating the pan front to back halfway through baking.

Let the cookies cool on the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer them on their liner to a wire rack to cool completely.

SANDWICH!

Form sandwiches using Method #1:

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1. Pair the cookies with like-size mates.
2. Place a 1/4-cup (60 ml) scoop of ice cream (1/3 cup / 80 ml) for large cookies, ice cream quantity permitting) between the bottoms of each cookie pair. For the neatest scoops, use a measuring cup with straight sides, about the diameter of the cookies, to measure out the ice cream. Fill the measure according to the recipe, and use a knife or offset spatula to release the scoop onto a cookie bottom.
3. Press gently to squeeze the ice cream slightly beyond the edge of the cookies. If desired, use a small offset spatula or the flat side of a dinner knife to smooth the ice cream flush with the edge.

Take it Easy

Use bakery snickerdoodles and substitute another cinnamon-friendly ice cream flavor, such as peach or honey.

Dress It Up

Roll the sides of the sandwiches in chopped toasted nuts or cinnamon morsels.