

Stars & Stripes Sweet Dip with Shortbread

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It's the 4th of July.

This is one of those holidays that gets a whole weekend. Some get a day, some get a break, this one gets a weekend. What are you doing for the 4th?

Traveling? Cookouts? Blowing your yard to bits with fireworks? Making a patriotic dessert? Of course you are!

And how lucky that a holiday to celebrate the birth of our nation falls in a season ripe with berries that match our national colors.

This dessert is essentially three components: shortbread, berries and cream. You can dress them up however you want.

This was my first experiment with shortbread. Up 'til now, I've pretty much only eaten shortbread during Girl Scout cookie season, but this recipe might change that. Rich, buttery and delicately sweet, these little cookies will definitely be repeated.

A word on cutting the shortbread: it must be cut right out of the oven, so if you're using cookie cutters, be prepared for them to get very hot.



Better yet, if you have a cookie cutter with a plastic top edge, that will probably make the experience more pleasant. Learn from me and my over-heated fingertips.



Next is the creamy mixture. Basically whipped cream plus cream cheese.

Hallelujah! The berries then need a quick ride in a pot on the stove to juice and turn into something between a syrup and a jam. Completely irresistible.

I reeeeeeally wanted these vertical stripes, but horizontal layers would probably be just as fun—maybe in a tall, clear bowl?

Shortbread stars, and stripes of berry quick jam and cream–cheese–enhanced whipped cream.



Now *that* is patriotic. Happy 4th of July!

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INGREDIENTS

For the Shortbread:

3/4 cup (12 tbsp, 170 g) unsalted butter, melted & warm

5 tablespoons (60 g) white sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/4 teaspoon salt

1½ cups (181 g) all-purpose flour

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RECIPE

(Makes 4 servings [uses 4 ramekins])

Make the Shortbread:

- 1.** In a small sauce pan, melt the butter over low heat.
- 2.** While the butter is melting, grease a 10-inch (25 cm) springform pan, tart pan or pie plate and set aside.
- 3.** In a medium bowl, combine butter, sugar, vanilla and salt. Stir until thoroughly blended.
- 4.** Add the flour and stir just until mixed.
- 5.** Spread the dough evenly into a greased pan with your fingers or the back of a spoon. Cover with a cloth and let rest for at least two hours (now is a great time to make the dip).
- 6.** After the dough has rested, heat the oven to 300°F (180°C).
- 7.** Remove the cloth from the pan with the shortbread dough and place the pan in the bottom half of the oven. Bake for 45 minutes.
- 8.** While the shortbread is baking, prepare a medium cookie sheet with a sheet of parchment paper.
- 9.** Remove the shortbread pan and place it on hot pads, but leave the oven on.

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INGREDIENTS

Sparkling sugar for sprinkling

For the Sweet Berry Stripe Dip:

2½ cups (283–425 g) mix of raspberries, blackberries and blueberries (plus extra for serving)

1/3 cup (66 g) white sugar

1/2 teaspoon cornstarch

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RECIPE

10. Sprinkle shortbread with sparkling sugar and cut stars with cookie cutters, placing the stars on the parchment paper cookie sheet.

11. Place the cookie sheet in the oven and cook the shortbread for an additional 15 minutes.

12. Once done, cool the cookies on a rack. Once the shortbread has cooled, serve it with the dip.

Make the Sweet Berry Stripe Dip:

13. Combine the berries, sugar and cornstarch in a medium sauce pan.

14. Over medium-high heat, bring the berries to a boil, stirring occasionally. Once the berries begin to boil, cook for 3–4 minutes; then remove them from the heat. The berries will now look more like jam, although there should still be some whole berries as well.

15. Pour the berries into a shallow dish and place in the fridge to cool.

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INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup (113 g)
whipping cream

1/2 teaspoon *vanilla extract*

1/2 tablespoon
powdered sugar

4–5 ounces (114–140 g) *cream cheese, softened*

1 tablespoon *milk*

1 tablespoon *white sugar*

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- 16.** In a standing mixer bowl, whip the cream until soft peaks form.
- 17.** Add the vanilla and powdered sugar and whip until stiff peaks form. (Secret, you just made whipped cream!)
- 18.** Transfer the whipped cream to a small bowl and set it aside.
- 19.** In the standing mixer bowl, add the cream cheese, milk, and white sugar. Whip until smooth and creamy.
- 20.** Add your freshly made whipped cream to the cream cheese mixture and combine.
- 21.** Prepare a piping bag with a large writing tip (I use Wilton #12) or, if your bag is disposable, simply snip off the end.

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INGREDIENTS

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RECIPE

- 22.** Add the cream mixture to the bag. Pipe stripes into 4 small ramekins that are about 1 inch tall and 3/4 of an inch wide.
- 23.** By this time, the berries should be cool. Carefully spoon the berries between the stripes of cream. Once the berry mixture has been added, feel free to add more cream, if needed.
- 24.** Place the ramekins in the fridge until ready to serve.