



Sparkling Strawberry Sangria

This light, slightly sweet, strawberry cocktail is easily made with or without booze, and intended to serve a crowd. Just place the pitcher on the table next to a glistening ice bucket, and a tray full of rocks glasses.

To make this drink alcohol-free, replace the elderflower liqueur (Grand Marnier) with elderflower simple syrup (sparkling apple cider), and replace the Prosecco with club soda. Elderflower simple syrup can be found at specialty stores, Ikea, or online.

Prep time: 20 minutes

Macerating time: 30 minutes

Yield: Serves 10

INGREDIENTS

1 lemon

2 pounds strawberries, divided

3/4 cup sugar, divided

1/4 cup water

1/4 cup packed basil (about 10 large leaves) + more for garnish

2 bottles of Prosecco or sparkling wine, chilled or for non-alcohol version, use ginger ale

1 1/2 cups elderflower liqueur, such as St. Germain or use Grand Marnier and for non-alcohol version, use sparkling apple cider or Club soda

Special equipment:

A large pitcher

METHOD

1 Zest the lemon: Use a vegetable peeler to remove strips of lemon skin from the lemon. Don't dig in too deeply. You only want the yellow outer portion of the skin, leaving most of the white pith on the lemon.

Juice the lemons and measure out 2 tablespoons of juice (save the remaining juice for another use). Set zest aside to make the simple syrup.

2 Prep and macerate the strawberries: Slice half of the strawberries (1 pound) into quarters and toss them with 1/2 cup of sugar and 2 tablespoons of the lemon juice in a medium sized bowl.

Set aside on the counter and let macerate for 30 minutes or up to 2 hours while you make the Basil Simple Syrup.

3 Make the basil simple syrup: Combine 1/4 cup of water and 1/4 cup of the sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat. Wait until the sugar is fully dissolved, about 3 to 5 minutes, then remove from heat and add the 1/4 cup of basil. Smash the basil a bit in the pan with a muddler or a potato masher. Add the strips of lemon zest.

Set the simple syrup aside and let it cool to room temperature—about 20 to 30 minutes. The longer you let the herbs and lemon steep the more prominent those flavors will become in the syrup.

Strain the syrup. Toss the basil. Save the lemon zest strips. (This simple syrup can be kept refrigerated for up to a week.)

4 Puree the strawberries: Transfer the macerated strawberries and all their juices to a blender or food processor. Puree, then strain the puree. (This puree can be refrigerated for up to a day).

5 Make the sangria: From the remaining strawberries, reserve 10 of the smaller strawberries for garnish (slice in half if they seem too large). Hull and slice the remainder.

In a large pitcher, combine the strawberry puree, basil lemon syrup, and elderflower liqueur. Stir to combine. Add two bottles of Prosecco, the sliced strawberries, fresh basil leaves, and the lemon peels from the simple syrup. Stir again.

6 Serve and Garnish: Pour the sangria into glasses filled with ice, and top with one fresh basil leaf. For the strawberry garnish, make a small cut down the center of a small strawberry, leaving the stem intact at the top. Slip the strawberry onto the rim of your glass.

Serve as is, or top with club soda to soften the sweetness of the drink or dilute the alcohol content.