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Sample these scrumptious desserts using seasonal fruit

By Susie Iventosch

In the last issue, we featured a recipe for quark, a type of dairy product that resembles something between cottage cheese and Greek yogurt. It is enjoyed in Northern European countries, especially in Germany and in Slavic countries, and is used in many of the baked goods in those places. As promised, we are featuring the recipes for Andy Scheck's Cherry Quark Cake and my Goat Cheese-Quark Cheesecake in this issue.

Since the last Lamorinda Weekly issue, I've made my second batch of quark, and this time, I allowed it to drain a little bit longer than the first time, which resulted in a texture more like soft cottage cheese than the smoother texture last time. Both batches, however, tasted the same and both worked very well in the baked goods made with the quark.

I need to note that we had a reader who was having some problems with the quark being too grainy in texture, and Andy and I think that the problem may have been in heating the buttermilk too quickly. So, if you have had a similar experience, try heating the buttermilk very slowly over low heat until the point where the liquid starts to separate at the edge of the pot, but before it comes to a boil. Remove it immediately. Andy says this is the proper chemical reaction you want to have for the best quark.

Andy serves his cake at room temperature, and my family really enjoyed it like that, but our leftover cake was chilled and I actually preferred it cold. The filling and flavors were more concentrated when it was cold. This is a personal preference, so you can experiment to see what you like best! Also, you can use almost any available fresh fruit you like for this cake. Andy used cherries and I made it with blackberries and blueberries, but it would also be lovely with peaches or apricots and perhaps even juicy plums. Look for the best in-season fruits!

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