

LAⁱⁿ BLOOM

Watermelon Granita

Serves 6

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On my first trip to Italy, my sister and I spent a week exploring Tuscany and Piedmont, areas that are known for sensational food and wine. We were so inspired that we decided to take a cooking class, where we learned to cook regional specialties such as Pici Pasta with Cherry Tomatoes and Garlic, a Country Herb Spinach Pie and Flaky Pastry with Chocolate, Pears and Pine nuts. One of the best things I recall tasting on that trip was a scoop of watermelon granita following a particularly heavy lunch. It was a hot day and the granita was intensely refreshing, like a snow cone but softer and with more flavor. You can make granita out of any fruit (I love using meyer lemons with vanilla sugar and mint) or even with espresso and cream. Italian inspired dessert, totally divine if you ask me.

1 cup sugar
1 cup water
4 cups, cubed watermelon
the zest of 1 lemon

Make simple syrup by combining the sugar and water in a small pan over medium heat and cooking until the sugar dissolves, stirring frequently. Let cool.

Blend the cubed watermelon in batches until smooth and pour into a wide and shallow baking dish (if the watermelon is not blending smoothly, add a splash of water). Add the lemon zest and half of the cooled simple syrup to the pureed fruit and stir. Give it a taste and add more syrup if needed - the amount of simple syrup necessary depends on the the type of fruit and your sweetness quotient (store any leftover simple syrup in a mason jar in the fridge and use for ice tea or coffee throughout the week).

Place the baking dish in your freezer for an hour. Remove and rake it over with a fork breaking up any ice crystals. You'll want to do this again two more times over the next hour or two, depending on your freezer. Rake again before serving (the consistency should be light and fluffy) and spoon into martini glasses . Serve with shortbread cookies.