

A Fourth of July Fruit Tart

Freedom in Christ is the sweetest treat we could ever receive.

Why do we celebrate the 4th of July? It was actually on July 2, 1776 that the United States of America became an independent nation. So then why the fourth? Well, it was on July 4, 1776 that the Continental Congress approved the final wording for the Declaration of Independence. On July 4th our government embraced these famous words by Thomas Jefferson:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness!

Spiritual Independence

It is these words that cause me to think how sweet freedom is, and how divine a right it is for all people. It reminds me of the greatest kind of freedom – being free in Christ. The Bible tells us, “so if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). Because Christ died on the cross we now have an opportunity to accept the final wording for our spiritual declaration of independence. It is through His death and resurrection that can have “life and life more abundantly.” In other words, in Christ we receive life, liberty, and the power to pursue true happiness.

No longer are we bound by the control of Satan. Now we are free entities capable of choosing a life of power and freedom in Jesus. His love is so sweet it allows us to choose Him. We don't *have* to love God. We don't *have* to be in relationship with Him. His love is not forced. It is not obtained through manipulation, or any other means of coercion. No, His love, His grace, His freedom is an all encompassing gift that we receive and will never be able pay back. Christ gave His life so that we could have *this* kind of freedom. And if you ask me it's the sweetest thing i've ever tasted.

Fun on the Fourth

As you take this day to celebrate with friends and family, I encourage to think about how sweet it is to be loved by God. And to help you enjoy your day here's a quick and easy healthy dessert for your Fourth of July! It's the perfect summer dessert. Great for barbecues and picnics. Trust me, everyone will love it and beg you for more.

Happy Fourth of July! May your national and spiritual freedom be as sweet as this Red White and Blue Fruit Tart.



Photo taken by: Emma Tchamba

Ingredients:

For the Crust:

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ packs of graham crackers
8 tbsp of unsalted butter
3 tbsp of sugar

Cream Filling:

8 oz of cream cheese (room temperature)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of heavy cream
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of vanilla

Fruits:

2 cup blueberries
1 cup blackberries
2 cups raspberries
1 cup strawberries
1 tbsp apricot jam or any jam (optional)

Instructions:

- Preheat oven at 350 degrees F, in a food processor, pulse the graham crackers with the 3 tbsp of sugar. Once that is finely ground, add the melted butter and pulse until well combined.
- Transfer the crust to a tart pan and press firmly in bottom and sides of the tart pan. You can use the bottom of a glass cup or measuring cup or

you can use your hands. Bake for about 11-12 minutes or until the crust is browned. Remove from oven and let crust cool completely.

- Using an electric hand mixer or stand mixer whip together the cream cheese with sugar until nice and fluffy, add in vanilla, and slowly add in heavy cream until soft peaks form.
- Spread the filling over the cooled crust and arrange your berries over the top.
- Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving. Can be chilled for up to 24 hrs before serving.

Optional Glaze:

- In a saucepan heat 1 tbsp of jam with 1 tbsp of water and stir until water is well incorporated. Use a pastry brush and brush glaze over the fruits. This glaze is totally optional but it does give the fruit a pastry shop finished look.