Strawberry and Cream Layer Cake

By [Claire Saffitz](https://cooking.nytimes.com/search?q=Claire+Saffitz&action=click&module=byline&region=recipe%20page)

* YIELD8 to 10 servings

1 ½ pounds fresh strawberries, hulled

½ cup granulated sugar

1 cup heavy cream, chilled

1 cup mascarpone or sour cream, chilled

 Pinch of kosher salt

sugar to taste, about 1-2 tablespoons

1 [Sponge Cake](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1022270-sponge-cake)recipe, baked in a 9-inch springform pan and cooled

PREPARATION

 Fill a small saucepan with about 1 inch of water and set over medium heat until the water steams.

 Meanwhile, coarsely chop about a quarter of the strawberries and combine in a medium heatproof bowl with the sugar. Cover the bowl tightly and set it over the saucepan. Reduce the heat if necessary to keep the water just below a simmer and allow the berries to sit, swirling the bowl once or twice to dissolve any stubborn sugar clumps, until they’ve released all their juices, are mushy, and swim in a translucent red liquid, 35 to 45 minutes. Remove the bowl from the heat, uncover and strain through a fine-mesh strainer.

 In a separate medium bowl, combine the heavy cream, crème fraiche, salt and sugar. Whisk the mixture vigorously by hand, or beat with a hand mixer on medium-high, until thick, light and holding a medium peak. Chill the bowl of whipped cream. Thinly slice the remaining raw strawberries lengthwise and sprinkle with sugar.

 Invert the sponge cake on a flat serving plate or cake stand. Holding a long serrated knife, slice clean through the cake horizontally. Set the top layer aside.

 Use a pastry brush to dab several tablespoons of the strawberry syrup across the bottom layer, lightly soaking the entire surface. Pull the bowl of cream from the refrigerator and dollop about half of it across the soaked layer, then spread in an even layer all the way to the edges. Arrange half of the sliced strawberries on top of the cream, then place the second cake layer on top of the first, cut-side up. Lightly soak the top layer of cake with the strawberry syrup, reserving any remaining syrup for serving. Spread the remaining cream on top of the cake, then pile the remaining sliced strawberries over top. Brush the strawberries lightly with remaining syrup. (If not serving immediately, cover loosely and refrigerate until ready to serve.)

 Slice the cake with a serrated knife and serve. Drizzle the slices with any remaining strawberry syrup. The cake is best served the day it’s made, but will keep, covered and chilled, for up to 3 days.