**Strawberries-and-Cream Stack Cake**

**Ingredients**

Ingredient Checklist

* 1 cup granulated sugar
* 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest, plus 1/4 cup fresh juice (from 1 to 2)
* 8 ounces mascarpone
* 2 cups heavy cream
* 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
* Pinch of fine sea or kosher salt
* 30 ladyfingers (from two 7-ounce packages)
* 1 pound fresh strawberries, hulled and thinly sliced, plus more halved or whole strawberries for decorating (optional) Fresh whole blueberries or sliced peaches would also work well in this recipe.

**Directions**

Combine granulated sugar and 3 tablespoons water in a small saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil over medium-high heat; continue boiling, covered, until sugar dissolves, about 1 minute. Uncover and continue boiling, swirling pan gently as color develops at edges of pan, until sugar turns medium amber and fragrant, 3 to 4 minutes more.

Remove from heat; carefully add lemon zest and juice and 1/4 cup cold water (add water all at once and pull hand away immediately; mixture will splatter and steam). Stir until smooth; if necessary, return pan to low heat to liquefy completely. Transfer to a heatproof bowl; let cool until slightly warm to the touch, about 30 minutes.

Whisk mascarpone, cream, confectioners' sugar, and salt on medium-high speed to stiff peaks. Working one at a time, use a pastry or small brush to coat ladyfingers with caramel, turning to fully coat and allowing excess to drip back into bowl. Spread a very thin layer of cream mixture on bottom of each dipped ladyfinger (to prevent sliding); arrange on a platter in a snug row.

Dollop one-third of remaining cream mixture on top; spread to edges in an even layer. Top with one-third of strawberries in a single layer. Repeat brushing and layering twice more (skipping the thin layer of cream mixture on bottom of cookies for remaining layers).

Cover loosely but fully and refrigerate at least 24 hours and up to 2 days. Top with more halved or whole berries. To serve, slice between each row of ladyfingers.