



In the Kitchen with Mari

Matcha Ice Cream

From July, 2011 Letter from Mari

When I was growing up, matcha (green tea powder) was used almost exclusively in tea ceremonies in Japan, where it was whisked in tea bowls (the size of a café au lait cup in France, but without handles) and savored as part of a meditation with friends, typically in a temple-like setting. The powder is whisked right into the water you drink, so it is unlike most teas, which are strained. Think of making instant coffee, and it gives you a rough sense of how matcha tea is prepared.

Today, matcha is becoming increasingly popular and is showing up in mass produced products like Häagen-Dazs Ice Cream (Green Tea Ice Cream) and Starbucks Coffee (Green Tea Latte). Most people I know, however, still don't have this wonderful ingredient in their pantries.

While I used to have to get matcha in Japan, today I can pick it up in Japanese supermarkets throughout the world. Of course, it is also easy to get online.

Unlike other teas, which are made of larger, tougher tea leaves and which therefore must be strained to be enjoyed, matcha is made from young, tender green tea leaves, which are powdered fine so can be added directly to foods. When used as an ingredient in drinks and desserts, the intense flavor of the matcha powder comes through in a clear way, allowing you to enjoy the distinct flavor of a high-end green tea in a new form.



At home, matcha becomes a quick (almost instant) way to create a flavorful and elegant dessert. Below, is one of the simplest recipes I know. I hope that you also

consider adding it to other recipes, like angel food cake, white chocolate bark and more, as the list of delicious combinations is endless.

Ingredients:

- Vanilla Ice Cream (1 Pint – 1 Liter, whatever quantity you desire, but be certain to use the best quality you can, be it homemade, or a high-end brand like Ben & Jerry's here in San Francisco, or even Häagen-Dazs)
- Matcha powder (3-4 Tablespoons, to give it a stronger 'tea' flavor)

Method:

If you care to make your own ice cream, use your favorite recipe for vanilla ice cream and follow instructions below.

Otherwise, allow vanilla ice cream to soften slightly (remove from freezer around 15 minutes).

Slowly incorporate matcha powder

Return ice cream to freezer to 'set.'

You can serve as-is. Consider accompanying with fresh berries, or, for a more 'Japanese' approach, you can add a scoop or sprinkle of sweet red adzuki beans.

Enjoy!