



It's berry time!



A good strawberry is a warm strawberry, says Lifestyle by V-ZUG's top chef Stefan Meier. Why? Because for him it means it has been freshly picked. As with all other fruit, strawberries also need to stock up on sunshine in order to develop their perfect sweetness. Once drunk on sun, they are rich in vitamin C, which boosts the immunity system, folic acid and, thanks to their high iron content, protect against anaemia. They are also high in calcium, potassium and magnesium: so sweet strawberries are healthy strawberries!

Meier goes immediately into raptures: "Strawberries start the ball rolling. They're the first sweet fruit of the season, which provides us with fresh inspiration in the kitchen, and the wonderful thing about them is that they stay with us well into the summer and encourage us to concoct delicious desserts." He likes to eat them fresh from the stalk, a practice that hasn't changed since playschool. Every morning, he would inspect



his strawberry bushes to see if there were any ripe berries hanging from the branches. It taught him to respect the product – seeing the fruit grow every day, noticing how much sun, water and care it needed to grow, harvesting it with pride, and then serving it with equal pleasure!

You don't need to add too much to a ripe, freshly picked strawberry to enjoy its full flavour. Maybe wash a basket (250g) of fresh strawberries, mix with 1 tablespoon of sugar and puree into a delicious summer soup? Or maybe serve strawberries as a salad with some fresh peppermint and vinaigrette made from peppery balsamic vinegar? One thing to remember when working with ripe strawberries is that they are somewhat sensitive to pressure as a result of their high water content. Their sweet juice is delicious, but unfortunately it goes off very quickly, so the best way to enjoy them is to eat them as soon as they've been picked or make them into a delicious dish in the kitchen. Meier again means it literally when he speaks of fresh strawberries and serves ripe – i.e. warm – berries poached in the steamer for 3 minutes at 80 °C before they melt on the tongue with some vanilla ice cream or vinaigrette made from balsamic vinegar with pepper.