



Sponge Cake with Rich Lemon Filling

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For many home bakers, sponge cake is no longer a simple workhorse recipe. The reason? Many cookbooks direct them to make sponge cake using the French génoise method, which is finicky and prone to disaster. For a génoise, whole eggs are beaten with sugar and then flour is very gently folded in. This folding process can be trying — especially for an inexperienced baker — because the delicate foam often collapses, and the result is a squat, lackluster cake. I wanted to develop a better, more foolproof recipe.

If you like, simply bake the sponge cake and fill it with jam such as blackberry and top with a sifted sprinkling of confectioners' sugar.—**Christopher Kimball**

SPONGE CAKE WITH RICH LEMON FILLING RECIPE

Quick Glance	50 M	1 H, 10 M	Serves 8
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INGREDIENTS

For the Rich Lemon Filling

1 cup sugar
1/4 cup cornstarch
1/8 teaspoon table salt
1 3/8 cups cold water
4 large egg yolks
2 teaspoons grated zest from 1 lemon
1/2 cup juice from 2 lemons
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

For the cake

Softened unsalted butter, for the pans
1/2 cup cake flour
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon table salt
2 tablespoons milk
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

5 large eggs, at room temperature
3/4 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 recipe Rich Lemon Filling
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting the cake

DIRECTIONS

Make the filling

1. Bring the sugar, cornstarch, salt, and water to a simmer in a large non-reactive saucepan over medium heat, whisking occasionally at the beginning of the process and more frequently as the mixture begins to thicken. When the mixture starts simmer and turn translucent, whisk in the egg yolks, two at a time. Whisk in the zest, then the lemon juice, and, finally, the butter. Bring the mixture to a good simmer, whisking constantly.
2. Remove the pan from the heat. Transfer the filling to another container to cool to room temperature, placing plastic wrap directly on the surface of the filling to prevent a skin from forming. The filling will thicken as it cools. To ensure that the filling does not thin out, do not stir it once it has set. (The filling can be refrigerated overnight.)

Make the cake

3. Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position and heat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease two 8-or-9-inch cake pans and cover pan bottoms with rounds of parchment paper.
4. Whisk the flours, baking powder, and salt together in a medium bowl. Heat the milk and butter in a small saucepan over low heat until the butter melts. Off heat, add the vanilla; cover and keep warm.
5. Separate the eggs, placing the whites in the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment (or a large mixing bowl if using a hand mixer or whisk) and reserving the yolks in another mixing bowl. Beat the whites on high speed until foamy. Gradually add 6 tablespoons of the sugar and the cream of tartar and continue to beat the whites to soft, moist peaks. If using a standing mixer transfer the beaten egg whites to a large bowl and add the egg yolks to the standing mixer bowl (don't clean the bowl).
6. Beat the egg yolks with the remaining 6 tablespoons sugar on medium-high speed until the mixture is very thick and a pale lemon color, about 5 minutes. Add the beaten egg whites to the yolks, but do not mix.
7. Sprinkle the flour mixture over the egg whites and mix on low speed for 10 seconds. Remove the bowl from the mixer, make a well in one side of the batter and pour the melted butter mixture into the bowl. Fold gently with a large rubber spatula until the batter shows no trace of flour and the whites and yolks are evenly mixed, about 8 strokes.
8. Immediately pour the batter into the prepared pans. Bake until the cake tops are light brown and feel firm and spring back when touched, about 16 to 18 minutes for 9-inch cake pans and 20 to 22 minutes for 8-inch cake pans.
9. Cool completely on racks. Run a thin knife around the inside of the cake pans and then invert them onto the racks (or onto cardboard rounds or tart pan bottoms) to release the cakes from the pans. Remove the parchment paper.
10. Place one cake layer on a serving plate. Carefully spoon the filling over the layer and spread evenly to the cake edge. Place the second cake layer on top, making sure the layers line up properly. Dust the cake with confectioners' sugar and serve.

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