

Classic Yellow Layer Cake with Vanilla Buttercream

Serves 8 to 10

Cake flour gives this buttery yellow cake its tender crumb; do not substitute all purpose flour. When making the buttercream, make sure that the sugar mixture is poured into the egg yolks while still hot. For a decorative finish, pres toasted sliced almonds on the sides of the cake.

CAKE

1 3/4 cups (7 ounces) cake flour (see note), plus extra for the pans
1/2 cup whole milk, at room temperature
4 large eggs, at room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups (10 1/2 ounces) sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoon table salt
16 tablespoons (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into 16 pieces and softened

VANILLA BUTTERCREAM

6 large egg yolks, at room temperature
3/4 cup (5 1/4 ounces) sugar
1/2 cup light corn syrup
2 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon table salt
4 sticks unsalted butter, cut into chunks and softened

1. FOR THE CAKE: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two 8 or 9 inch round cake pans, then line the bottoms with parchment paper. Whisk the milk, eggs, and vanilla together in a small bowl.
2. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, whisk the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt together on low speed until combined, about 30 seconds. Increase the speed to medium low and beat the butter into the flour mixture, one piece at a time, about 30 seconds. Continue to beat the mixture until it resembles moist crumbs, about 1 minute.
3. Beat in all but 1/2 cup milk mixture, then increase the mixer speed to medium and beat the batter until smooth, light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Reduce the mixer speed to low and slowly beat the remaining 1/2 cup milk mixture until the batter looks slightly curdled, about 15 seconds.
4. Give the batter a final stir with a rubber spatula to make sure it is thoroughly combined. Scrape the batter into the prepared pans and smooth the tops with a rubber spatula. Lightly tap the pans against the counter top to or three times to settle the batter. Bake the cakes until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out with a few crumbs attached, 20 to 25 minutes, rotating the pans halfway through the baking time.
5. Cool the cakes in the pans for 10 minutes. Run a small knife around the edge of the cakes, then flip them out onto a wire rack. Peel off the parchment paper, flip the cakes right side up, and cool completely before frosting, about 2 hours.

6. FOR THE FROSTING: Whip the egg yolks in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until slightly thickened and pale yellow, 4 to 6 minutes.

7. Meanwhile, bring the sugar and corn syrup to a boil in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally to dissolve the sugar, about 3 minutes.

8. Without letting the hot sugar mixture cool off, turn the mixer to low and slowly pour the warm sugar syrup into the whipped egg yolks without hitting the side of the bowl or the beaters. Increase the mixer speed to medium high and whip the mixture until it is light and fluffy and the bowl is no longer warm, 5 to 10 minutes.

9. Reduce the mixer speed to medium low and add the vanilla and salt. Gradually add the butter, one piece at a time, until completely incorporated, about 2 minutes. Increase the mixer speed to medium high and whip the buttercream until smooth and silky, about 2 minutes. (if the mixture looks curdled, wrap a hot wet towel around the bowl and continue to whip until smooth, 1 to 2 minutes).

10. Line the edges of a cake platter with strips of parchment to keep the platter clean while you assemble the cake. Place one cake layer on the platter. Spread 1 1/2 cups of the frosting evenly across the top of the cake with a spatula. Place the second cake layer on top, then spread the remaining frosting evenly over the top and sides of the cake. Remove the parchment strips from the platter before serving.