

Lavender Lemon Cake

(makes a 9-inch triple-layer cake, serving 15 to 18)



Ingredients

- 2 ½ cups and 2 tablespoons cake flour
- 1 1/2 cups sugar, divided
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- 9 egg whites
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons buttermilk
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- Juice from one large lemon or two small
- 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 4 tablespoons culinary lavender (or unsprayed garden lavender)
- **Italian Buttercream Frosting (yields 7 cups):**
- 1 pound (16 oz.) unsalted butter, cut into small cubes
- 1 ½ + 1/3 cups granulated sugar, divided
- ½ cup water
- 7 large egg whites
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla
- Half a jar of lemon curd

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line bottoms of three 9-inch round cake pans with parchment. Very lightly, very lightly, grease sides (I use avocado spray)
2. Whisk together the flour, ¾ cup of the sugar, lavender, and baking soda. Set aside.

3. In a large clean mixer, whip the egg whites with the cream of tartar until frothy with an electric mixer on high speed; slowly add the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar and continue whipping until soft peaks form.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, oil, half of the lemon juice and vanilla until well blended. Spoon $\frac{1}{4}$ of the whipped egg whites on top of the buttermilk mixture, then add a third of the dry ingredients on top; fold very gently until mostly mixed; repeat two more times; add the remaining egg whites and fold in very gently; divide the batter among the three prepared cake pans.
5. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until a cake tester or toothpick comes out clean; transfer to wire racks and let the cakes cool completely in the pans, for an hour before turning them out; run a blunt knife around the rim of the pan half-way through cooling; peel off the paper liners; mix up the rest of the lemon juice with a little sugar and poke holes in the bottom of the cakes and pour the juice in them. You can experiment with how much lemon juice you want to use -intuition is key!

Italian Buttercream Recipe Instructions (online - the spruceEats)

1. Gather the ingredients
2. Let the butter come to room temperature; meanwhile, put 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of the granulated sugar in a small pot. Add the water and stir to combine. With your fingers or a pastry brush, wipe any sugar crystals from the sides of the pot.
3. Heat over medium-high heat until the sugar syrup reaches 238 F. about 10 minutes. Do not stir the syrup while it is cooking since this will cause the sugar to crystalize.
4. Meanwhile, put the egg whites and salt into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Whisk on medium speed until the whites become frothy.
5. With the mixer running, in a slow, steady stream, add the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ granulated sugar to the bowl of the stand mixer. Increase the speed to high and continue to whisk until the mixture reaches medium-stiff peaks.
6. Once the sugar syrup reaches 238 F., remove from the heat. Reduce the mixer speed to low. With the mixer running, slowly stream the sugar syrup down the side of the bowl until fully incorporated into the meringue.
7. Increase the speed to medium high and continue to whisk until it is doubled in size and the bottom of the bowl is no longer warm, about ten minutes.

8. Switch to the paddle attachment. With the mixer on medium speed, slowly add the cubed butter a couple pieces at a time until the butter is fully incorporated, smooth, and fluffy before adding the next addition. The mixture may seem to resemble the texture of cottage cheese or thin out at moments as you add the butter, but continue to whip the mixture and it will thicken to smooth, firm peaks.
9. Fold in the lemon curd and vanilla and continue to mix until everything comes together into a beautiful silky smooth buttercream.

NOTE: The recipe gives **a raw egg warning**, but I feel that the boiled syrup incorporates quickly into the egg whites and cooks them. They advise using pasteurized egg whites (Pete and Gerry's has them, but they didn't work for me) You have to decide what is best...no-one got sick at my celebration.

Tips: If buttercream looks like soup, either the meringue was too warm before adding in the butter or it needs to be whipped longer. If that doesn't work, try putting the whole bowl in the fridge for 15 minutes to chill, and then scrape down and whip again. If buttercream looks like chunks of butter, ingredients were too cold; let it come to room temp and try whipping again. Yikes! Take many deep breaths, slow down, be present, and this frosting is worth it!

You can leave the lemon curd out if you just want the Italian Buttercream Frosting with vanilla...

It was perfectly delicious and could be a wonderful wedding cake!