

Strawberry Cream Cake Recipe

Ingredients for the cake:

3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 1/2 cups sugar
3 large eggs, at room temperature
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup buttermilk, at room temperature
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

For the berries:

2 pints strawberries, rinsed, hulled, and halved (about 4 cups)
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice (from about 1/2 medium lemon)
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest

For the filling:

1/2 cup mascarpone cheese
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 tablespoon sugar, optional

For the frosting:

1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup sugar, plus 1 tablespoon sugar
1 3/4 cup heavy cream
1/4 cup mascarpone cheese

Directions for the cake:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F with the rack in the middle of the oven. Butter two 8 inch round or square cake pans and line the bottoms with wax paper or parchment paper cut to fit. Butter the paper, and evenly coat pans with flour. Beat the butter and sugar at medium speed with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, about 2 to 3 minutes, in a large mixing bowl. Beat in eggs one at a time. Scrape the bowl and beaters to incorporate.

Sift the flour with the baking powder and baking soda. Add one quarter of the dry mixture to the butter-egg mixture and then add the vanilla and a third of the buttermilk. Repeat beginning and ending with the flour mixture and scraping well after each addition. Pour the batter into the prepared pans and spread to the edges with a spatula. Bake 24 to 27 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into center comes out clean. Cool the cake in pans on a rack for 5 minutes. Remove cake from pans by turning cake onto the rack. Remove the parchment paper or wax paper and cool completely before frosting. You may wrap cooled cakes in plastic wrap (wrap individually) if frosting the next day.

For the berries, combine the strawberries, granulated sugar, lemon juice, vanilla extract, and lemon zest in a medium nonreactive mixing bowl and toss to thoroughly coat strawberries. Let berries soften at room temperature at least 20 minutes before using. Strain the berries and reserve syrup separately.

Next to do the filling, combine the mascarpone cheese and heavy cream in a medium bowl. With the electric mixer on high speed, whip until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

For the frosting, place a medium bowl, beaters (to the electric mixer), and heavy cream in the freezer for 10 minutes. Combine the vanilla extract, sugar, mascarpone cheese and heavy cream in the chilled bowl and whip at medium speed until medium peaks form, about 2 minutes.

To assemble the cake, use a long serrated knife to trim the tops of the cakes as necessary so that they are level. Place cake rounds on a clean, dry surface. Using a pastry brush, brush 1/2 of the reserved strawberry syrup on the cut side of the first cake round; repeat on the cut side of the second cake round. Evenly spread 1/4 of the

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mascarpone filling over the cut side of the bottom cake layer. Arrange the strawberry halves, cut side down, over the mascarpone layer, and trim as necessary to create an even layer. Cover the berries with the remaining filling, being sure to fill in any empty space.

Place the second cake layer over the mascarpone and strawberries, cut side down, pressing gently to secure it. Using a butter knife or any spreading tool, spread the frosting over the top and sides of the cake. Decorate cake with any remaining strawberries. Chill the cake for at least 15 minutes before serving. Refrigerate any leftover cake. Serves 12.