

Old-Fashioned Peach Cake with Peach Cream Cheese Frosting

There's something special about a cake that's entirely made from scratch. Perhaps it's knowing the work that goes into it or the memories of summer that come flooding back with each bite. This recipe works best with the ripest, juiciest peaches - added to both the batter and frosting for the perfect flavor of a summertime in the South. The trick to making the frosting is to cook down the peaches - reducing the water and concentrating the flavor without making the frosting too soft to hold up to icing the finished cake.

Ingredients

OLD-FASHIONED PEACH CAKE

- 3 ½ cups sifted cake flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 ¾ teaspoons baking powder
- ¾ cup salted butter, softened
- 2 ¼ cups granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ½ tsp pure almond extract
- 1 cup washed, pitted and pureed peaches

PEACH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

- 2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
- 2 sticks salted butter, softened
- 2 pounds powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 3 peaches
- 2 T granulated sugar

To make the cakes, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare three 8-inch round cake pans by spraying with non-stick cooking spray, lining the bottom with parchment and dusting the sides lightly with flour. Set aside.

Sift together the flour, salt and baking powder. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat together the butter, sugar, eggs, vanilla and almond extract for three minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the sifted flour to this creamed mixture a cup at a time, alternating with the peach puree. Beat at medium speed for two minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl halfway through.

Divide the cake batter equally among the three prepared cake pans and spread it evenly. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until cake tests done. When baked, remove from oven and turn out on wire racks to cool. Once cool, the cakes can be wrapped and refrigerated overnight if needed.

For the frosting, start by preparing the peaches. Wash and pit the peaches but leave the skins on for added color. Add the peaches and 2 T of granulated sugar to a blender and process until smooth. You should have about 2 cups of peach puree. Pour this puree into a saucepan over medium-high heat and cook, stirring constantly until it has reduced down to a thick paste or ½ cup in finished volume. Let cool completely.

Add the softened cream cheese and butter to the bowl of an electric mixer and beat with a paddle to combine. Add the powdered sugar a bit at a time, scraping down the sides as needed. Once all of the powdered sugar has been incorporated, add the vanilla and the cooled peach paste and continue to beat on high for another minute until the frosting is fluffy.

Assemble the cake one layer at a time, adding about a cup of frosting between each layer and pressing the next layer lightly on top. Ice the assembled layers with a thin coating of frosting and refrigerate for one hour to set before spreading the remaining frosting evenly over the top and sides. Chill for one hour to set the frosting, garnish with fresh peaches if desired and serve.

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