

Birthday Recipes

The Best White Cake

Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
½ cup vegetable shortening
3 cups granulated sugar
5 eggs, room temperature
3 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup whole milk, room temperature
½ cup buttermilk, room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract



Directions:

Preheat oven to 350° F. Prepare 3 (9") round cake pans with nonstick baking spray or coated well with shortening or butter and floured, taking care to remove all excess flour.

Cream together butter and shortening until light and fluffy with an electric mixer. Slowly add sugar one cup at a time, making sure to fully incorporate each cup before adding another. Add eggs one at a time, making sure to fully incorporate each egg before adding another.

Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Pour milks and vanilla into measuring cup and whisk together with a fork. Add to butter and shortening mixture alternately with milk mixture, beginning and ending with dry ingredients. Gently stir all ingredients until well combined. Stop mixer and scrape down sides and bottom of bowl, making sure to have all ingredients mixed well.

Evenly distribute cake batter between cake pans and place pans into oven. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until a toothpick or cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove and allow to cool slightly in cake pans for about 5 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack. Frost cake as desired.

Russian Birthday Pie

Ingredients:

Dough:

- 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon fine salt
- 14 tablespoons cold butter, diced
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten with 2 tablespoons cold water

Filling:

- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 pound baking apples, like Golden Delicious, Cortland, or Mutsu
- ⅔ cup sugar, plus more for sprinkling on the pie
- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Generous pinch of ground nutmeg
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten

Directions:

Make the dough by hand. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, and salt. Using your fingers, work the butter into the dry ingredients until it resembles yellow corn meal mixed with bean-sized bits of butter (if the flour/butter mixture gets warm, refrigerate it for 10 minutes before proceeding). Add the egg and stir the dough together with a fork or by hand in the bowl. If the dough is dry, sprinkle up to a tablespoon more of cold water over the mixture.

Form the dough into a disk, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, at least 1 hour.

Make the filling. Put the lemon juice in a medium bowl. Peel, halve, and core the apples. Cut each half into 4 wedges. Toss the apple with the lemon juice. Add the sugar and toss to combine evenly.

In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the apples and cook, stirring, until the sugar dissolves and the mixture begins to simmer, about 2 minutes. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook until the apples soften and release most of their juices, about 7 minutes.



Strain the apples in a colander over a medium bowl to catch all the juice. Shake the colander to get as much liquid as possible. Return the juices to the skillet, and simmer over medium heat until thickened and lightly caramelized, about 10 minutes.

In a medium bowl, toss the apples with the reduced juice and spices. Set aside to cool completely. (This filling can be made up to 2 days ahead and refrigerated or frozen for up to 6 months.)

Cut the dough in half. On a lightly-floured surface, roll each half of dough into a disc about 11" – 12" wide. Layer the dough between pieces of parchment or wax paper on a baking sheet and refrigerate for at least 10 minutes.

Place a rack in the lower third of the oven and preheat the oven to 375° F.

Line the bottom of a 9" pie pan with one of the discs of dough and trim it so it lays about ½" beyond the edge of the pan. Put the apple filling in the pan and mound it slightly in the center. Brush the top edges of the dough with the egg. Place the second disc of dough over the top. Fold the top layer of dough under the edge of the bottom layer and press the edges together to form a seal. Flute the edge as desired. Carve a birthday message into the top crust layer with a butter knife. Brush the surface of the dough with egg and then sprinkle with sugar. Pierce the top of the dough in several places to allow steam to escape while baking. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes.

Bake the pie on a baking sheet until the crust is golden, about 50 minutes. Cool on a rack before serving. The pie keeps well at room temperature (covered) for 24 hours or refrigerated for up to 4 days.

Chinese Long Life Noodles

Ingredients:

1 pound fresh Asian-style wheat noodles
1 ½ tablespoons Shaoxing (Chinese rice wine) or dry sherry
1 ½ teaspoons hoisin sauce
½ teaspoon cornstarch
6 ounces boneless pork tenderloin, cut into 2" x ¼" strips
3 tablespoons dark soy sauce
2 tablespoons oyster sauce
1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
½ teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon canola oil, divided
1 cup chopped Napa (Chinese) cabbage
½ teaspoon minced garlic
1 ¼ cups (1") sliced green onions



Directions:

Cook noodles according to package directions, omitting fat and salt. Drain and rinse with cold water; drain. Set aside.

Combine wine, hoisin sauce, and cornstarch in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add pork; stir to coat. Cover and let stand 10 minutes.

Combine dark soy sauce, oyster sauce, low-sodium soy sauce, and sugar in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk; set mixture aside.

Heat 1 teaspoon oil in a wok or large skillet over high heat. Add cabbage to pan; stir fry 2 minutes. Transfer cabbage to a bowl.

Heat 2 teaspoons oil in pan. Add garlic; stir fry 10 seconds or until fragrant. Add pork mixture; stir fry 3 minutes or until done. Add pork mixture to bowl with cabbage.

Wipe pan clean with paper towels; return to heat. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Add reserved noodles; stir fry 1 minute. Add onions and soy sauce mixture to pan; stir fry 1 minute. Add pork mixture; stir to combine. Cook 1 minute or until hot.

Australian Fairy Bread

Ingredients:

8 slices white bread, crusts trimmed
¼ cup margarine, softened
¼ cup multicolored candy sprinkles

Directions:

Spread margarine onto slices of bread. Cover with sprinkles. Cut into triangles to serve.



Brazilian Brigadeiro (Chocolate Truffle)

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
1 tablespoon butter
1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk

Directions:

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine cocoa, butter, and condensed milk. Cook, stirring until thickened, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let rest until cool enough to handle. Form into small balls and eat at once or chill until serving.



Pannenkoeken (Dutch Pancakes)

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups flour

2 cups milk

1 egg

Pinch of salt

Butter for frying

Optional toppings:

Sugar

Sliced apple

Dark syrup (molasses)

Honey



Directions:

Sift the flour into a bowl. Add the eggs and a pinch of salt. Add about half of the milk. Whisk energetically until there are no more lumps. Slowly add the milk and keep whisking. The batter will be quite thin and should have no lumps. The technique to add half the milk first and add the rest slowly afterwards should help to avoid lumps.

Heat a non-stick frying pan over high heat. Add a ½ tablespoon butter for the first pancake. Distribute the butter around the pan with a wooden spatula or by tilting the pan. Pour in batter as soon as the butter starts to turn brown. Pour all the batter in the center of the pan. You need about 6-7 tablespoons of batter for a single pancake. Tilt the pan to distribute the batter evenly all over the pan. Put the pan down and allow to cook over medium high to high heat.

It is time to turn the pancake if the top starts to get dry and smoke starts to trickle from underneath. You can peek underneath using a wooden spatula; the pancake should be golden brown before you flip it. To flip the pancake, first shake the pan a bit and tilt it such that the pancake has shifted to the edge of the pan. Flip the

pancake into the air with a brisk motion. Cook the other side on medium high to high heat until smoke starts to trickle from below. Again, you can peek with a spatula. As soon as the pancake is done, let it slide onto a plate.

For the next pancake, start again with butter. The first is always the hardest, although it helps to preheat the pan.

Dutch pancakes are usually rolled up and then sliced to eat.

Doodh Pak (Indian Rice Pudding)

Ingredients:

4 ¼ cups milk
A few saffron strands
1 tablespoon rice
1 tablespoon ghee or clarified butter
½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon cardamom powder

For the Garnish:

A few almonds or pistachio slivers



Directions:

Dissolve the saffron in 1 tablespoon warm milk and keep aside. Wash and drain the rice, add the ghee, and mix well. Keep aside. Bring the remaining milk to a boil in a broad-bottom non-stick pan and simmer for approximately 15 minutes, while stirring occasionally.

Add the rice, mix well, and simmer for approximately 25 minutes, while stirring occasionally.

Add the sugar, cardamom powder, and saffron-milk mixture; mix well and cook on a medium flame for 15 minutes or till the sugar is completely dissolved. Serve warm garnished with almond or pistachio slivers.

Canadian Fortune (Hidden Coin) Cake

Ingredients:

For the frosting:

16 ounces semisweet chocolate, very finely chopped
2 $\frac{3}{8}$ cups heavy cream
1 teaspoon light corn syrup



For the cake:

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature, plus more for pans
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for pans
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups cake flour, not self-rising
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar
4 large eggs
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups milk

For the orange curd:

12 large egg yolks
Zest of 2 oranges
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon coarse salt
1 cup (2 sticks), plus 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, cold, cut into small pieces

Directions:

Make the frosting: Place chocolate in a medium, heatproof bowl. In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, bring cream to a boil and immediately remove from heat. Pour over chocolate and let sit, undisturbed, for 3 minutes. Gently whisk until combined and smooth. Whisk in the corn syrup.

Let cool to room temperature, then transfer ganache to refrigerator and chill, stirring frequently and scraping the sides of the bowl with a spatula, until slightly stiff and cool enough to spread, about 1 hour. If frosting becomes too firm, briefly place bowl over a saucepan of simmering water and stir until desired consistency is reached. Frosting should be smooth and spreadable, but not runny.

Make the cake: Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter two 8" x 2" round cake pans; line the bottoms with parchment paper. Butter parchment and dust with flour, tapping out excess; set aside. Into a medium bowl, sift together flours, baking powder, and salt; set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Beat in eggs, one at a time, and then beat in vanilla. With the mixer on low speed, add the flour mixture in 3 parts, alternating with the milk and beginning and ending with the flour; beat until combined after each addition.

Divide the batter between the prepared pans and smooth with an offset spatula. Bake, rotating the pans halfway through, until the cakes are golden brown, and a cake tester inserted in the centers comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Transfer pans to a wire rack to cool 20 minutes. Invert cakes onto the rack; peel off the parchment. Re-invert cakes and let them cool completely, top sides up.

Make the orange curd: Combine yolks, orange zest, orange juice, lemon juice, and sugar in a heavy-bottom saucepan; whisk to combine. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon or heatproof spatula (be sure to scrape the sides of the pan), until the mixture is thick, about 8 to 10 minutes. Let mixture come to a vigorous simmer and cook, continually scraping sides of pan, for 2 minutes.

Remove saucepan from heat. Add salt and butter, one piece at a time, stirring until smooth. If desired, strain through a fine sieve into a medium bowl. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing it directly onto the surface of the curd to prevent a skin forming. Refrigerate until chilled and very firm, at least 2 hours or up to 1 ½ weeks.

Assemble cake: Using a serrated knife, trim the tops of the cakes to make level. Split each layer into two, for a total of four. Place bottom layer on a rotating cake stand and with an offset spatula, carefully top with ½ cup of orange curd, leaving a 1" border. Place a coin in between these 2 layers. Place the second cake layer on top, spread with another ¾ cup of the orange curd. Repeat with the third layer; top with the final cake layer. Insert 3 wooden skewers into the top of the cake to secure.

For the crumb coat, spread the entire cake with a thin coat of frosting using an offset spatula. Chill for at least 30 minutes.

Spread the entire cake with remaining frosting, swirling to coat in a decorative fashion. Serve immediately, or refrigerate, covered with a cake dome. Let sit at room temperature for about 20 minutes before serving.

Miyeok Guk (Korean Seaweed Soup)

Ingredients:

4 cups of soaked miyeok (1 cup dried seaweed)
16 cups water
4 to 5 tablespoons fish sauce
200 grams beef brisket
1 tablespoon minced garlic
Sesame oil



Directions:

Soak 1 cup dried miyeok in a big bowl for at least 30 minutes. Drain and cut into bite-sized pieces.

Put the soaked miyeok (about 4 cups worth) into a big pot and add 16 cups of water. Boil over high heat for 20 minutes. Add more water if the soup gets too thick.

Cut the beef brisket into bite-sized pieces. Add the beef and garlic to the pot and boil for another 20 to 25 minutes over medium heat. Add the fish sauce and drizzle a few drops of sesame oil on top before serving.

Serve with rice if you have it. Put a few spoonfuls of rice (or the whole bowl) into the soup and eat.