

Fresh Strawberry Lemonade Cake

Recipe Courtesy of ASpicyPerspective.com

Enjoy the fresh appeal of this month's ultra-moist southern strawberry cake, with its little extra punch of lemon. The fresh strawberries between the cake layers are a sweet surprise when you cut it open. Perfect for summer events, this cake can sit out covered at room temp for 3 days!



Ingredients:

For the Fresh Strawberry Lemonade Cake:

- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 cups unsalted butter, softened
- 2 3/4 cups cake flour (2 1/2 cups AP flour + 1/4 cup cornstarch)
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 cup whole milk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon strawberry extract
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- Zest of two lemons
- 3-9 drops red food coloring (optional)
- 40 small fresh ripe strawberries, trimmed

For the Lemon Cream Cheese Frosting:

- 16 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 5-7 cups powdered sugar

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line two 9-inch cake pans with parchment paper circles then spray with nonstick cooking spray.
2. For the Cake: In the bowl of an electric stand mixer, cream the sugar and butter on high until light and fluffy, 3-5 minutes. Scrape the bowl with a spatula. Turn the mixer on low and add in the baking

powder, salt, eggs, strawberry and vanilla extracts, and lemon zest. Scrape the bowl again and slowly beat in the flour and milk. Mix in food coloring if desired.

3. Once smooth, pour the batter into the two cake pans. Bake for approximately 25 minutes, until toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes in the pans. Then flip the cakes out onto a cooling rack, remove the parchment paper, and cool completely.
4. For the Frosting: In a clean mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese until light and fluffy. Scrape the bowl and beat in the butter. (Do this separately to avoid clumps.) Turn the mixer on low and slowly add the lemon juice. One cup at a time, beat in the powdered sugar, until you reach your desired consistency. Scrape the bowl and beat again until very smooth.
5. To Assemble: Place one cake layer on a cake stand. Spread frosting over the cake in a thin layer. Press the strawberries, trimmed side down, over the surface of the cake. Then slather more frosting over the berries, filling the spaces in between. Set the top cake layer over the strawberries and press to level. Dollop frosting over the top and spread in out and down over the sides.
6. For Hombre Frosting Effect: Leave 1/2+ cup frosting in the mixing bowl. Add 1-3 drop red food coloring into the frosting and beat until the color is consistent. Starting at the bottom, spread the frosting around the edges. Then move upward in sweeping motions. Spread a little pink over the top if desired.



Bakers Tip:

The easiest way to level and frost a cake is to take the time to freeze the cake layers first. Wrap each layer in plastic and freeze for at least 2 hours. Then stack, level, and frost the cake as directed. Set the cake out on the counter for another 2-3 hours to thaw and soften. This helps ward off broken cake layers, slanted cakes, and crumbs in the frosting. This cake can sit out at room temperature, covered, for up to 3 days.