

YOGURT CAKE with STRAWBERRY BALSAMIC CREAM

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This light and easy-to-prepare cake is one you may find yourself making often. Made in many parts of Europe, it is very versatile - like a blank canvas - so try it with any seasonal fruit, lemon instead of orange, no fruit at all, or even with savory fresh herbs. To make the cake gluten-free, use a one-to-one gluten-free baking flour in place of traditional all-purpose flour. It will turn out marvelously.

And, if a 10-inch cake is too large for your needs, the recipe halves nicely and can be baked in a 6-inch round cake pan for approximately the same amount of time. As with any cake, the key is not to over bake, so watch it carefully as the end time approaches.

photo: Love+Craft Kitchen

Makes: one 10-inch round cake or 9 1/2-inch loaf

Prep Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Baking Time: cake:30 - 35 minutes; loaf: 30 - 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 cup plain yogurt (full fat)

2 large eggs, room temperature

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup olive oil

1 tablespoon orange juice, Grand Marnier or Blood Orange liqueur

1/2 teaspoon orange zest

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour or Bob's Red Mill 1:1 Gluten-Free flour

1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/4 teaspoon Kosher salt

5 - 8 fresh strawberries, cleaned, tops removed, sliced

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350° F. Prepare a 10-inch round cake pan or 9 1/2-inch loaf pan by spraying lightly with cooking / baking spray and lining the bottom with parchment paper.
- In a large mixing bowl, combine the yogurt, eggs, sugar, olive oil, orange juice and orange zest. Mix until fully combined.
- In a medium-sized mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
- Fold the flour mixture into the yogurt mixture, mixing until it just comes together. (Careful not to over mix.)
- Transfer the batter to the prepared baking pan and smooth out evenly.
- Gently lay the sliced strawberries on the top of the batter in any arrangement you wish.
- Bake the cake for approximately 30 - 35 minutes, until the top springs back lightly and the toothpick or cake tester comes out clean from the center. Watch carefully so as not to over bake.
- Remove cake from oven and allow to rest in the pan for 10 minutes. Run a knife around the sides of the pan and carefully transfer the cake to a serving platter, removing the parchment paper from the bottom. Allow cake to cool before serving.

To Serve

Either serve cake slightly warm or at room temperature with a dollop of Strawberry Balsamic Cream (recipe follows), **OR** cake divide into two layers and spread the prepared cream topping between the layers. **Cool cake completely if dividing into two layers and adding Strawberry Balsamic Cream.** Once cream layer is added, place top layer back on, cover and chill for at least 30 minutes before slicing.

STRAWBERRY BALSAMIC CREAM

This light and delicious whipped topping is wonderful surprise when served alongside desserts or when used as a cream filling in layer cakes. When the strawberries are in season, a lower amount of granulated sugar will be needed.

Makes approximately 2 cups

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ cups fresh strawberries, cleaned, tops removed, diced
1 - 2 tablespoon granulated sugar
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar (sweet flavored)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup heavy cream
½ cup sour cream
1 tablespoon powdered sugar

DIRECTIONS

- Place the strawberries, granulated sugar, balsamic vinegar and vanilla in a small sauce pan over medium to medium-low heat. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook until the mixture becomes thick and jam-like, about 5 - 8 minutes. Set aside and cool completely.
- In a large, chilled mixing bowl, beat the heavy cream and sour cream to soft peaks (slightly firm, yet droop over easily). Add the powdered sugar and vanilla and continue to beat to stiff peaks (very firm, hold shape).
- Using a rubber spatula, gently fold the cooled strawberry mixture into the whipped cream, careful not to release the volume of the cream. (Do not stir.) Chill for at least 30 minutes (preferably longer) or up to 1 day before using.

TIP: Chilling the mixing bowl and beater thoroughly before whipping cream helps it become light and fluffy, as well as hold its shape.