

The Perfect Party Cake –Dorie Greenspan said so!

For the cake:

- 2 ¼ cups cake flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ t. salt
- 1 ¼ cups whole milk or buttermilk
- 4 large egg whites
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ½ teaspoon pure lemon extract

For the buttercream:

- 1 cup sugar
- 4 large egg whites
- 3 sticks (12 oz.) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice (from 2 large lemons)
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

For finishing:

- 2/3 cup seedless raspberry preserves, stirred vigorously or warmed gently until spreadable
- About 1 ½ cups sweetened shredded coconut

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter 2 9-inch cake pans.

To make the cake: Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Whisk the milk and egg whites in an a medium bowl. Put the sugar and lemon zest in a mixer bowl and rub them together with your fingers until the sugar is moist and fragrant. Add the butter and beat at medium speed for 3 minutes, until the butter and sugar are very light. Beat in the extract, then add the dry ingredients, alternately with the wet ones, starting and ending with the dry. Give the batter a good 2-minute beating to ensure that it is thoroughly mixed and well aerated. Divide the batter between the two pans and smooth the tops.

Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until they are well-risen and springy to the touch. Transfer cakes to cooling racks and cool for about 5 minutes, then remove them from the pans, letting them cool completely.

To make the buttercream: Put the sugar and egg whites in a mixer bowl or other large heatproof bowl, fit the bowl over a pan of simmering water and whisk constantly, keeping the mixture over the heat until it feels hot to the touch, about 3 minutes. The sugar should be dissolved, and the mixture will look like shiny marshmallow cream. Remove the bowl from the

heat. Working with the whisk attachment, beat the meringue on medium speed until it is cool, about 5 minutes. Switch to the paddle attachment if you have one, and add the butter a stick at a time, beating until smooth. Once all the butter is in, beat the buttercream on medium-high speed until it is thick and very smooth, 6-10 minutes. During this time, the buttercream may curdle or separate - just keep beating and it will come together again. On medium speed, gradually beat in the lemon juice, waiting until each addition is absorbed before adding more, and then the vanilla. You should have a shiny, smooth, velvety, pristine white buttercream. Press a piece of plastic against the surface of the buttercream and set aside till you are ready to frost the cake.

To assemble the cake: Using a sharp, serrated knife and a sawing motion, slice each layer of cake horizontally in half. Put one layer cut side up on a cake plate. Spread with jam, then buttercream. Top with another layer, jam, and buttercream, then do the same with a third layer. Place the last layer on top and use the rest of the buttercream to cover the entire outside of the cake. Press the coconut into the frosting, patting it gently so that it sticks well.

Enjoy!