

SWEDISH ALMOND CAKE

From the kitchen of: Joy Ercanbrack

My great-great grandmother, Karna Jonsdotter, immigrated from Sweden in 1881 with her husband and children. She ran a boarding house in Salt Lake City and although life was not easy, I like to think she found white flour and sugar to make this cake at Christmastime. Traditionally, the cake would have been baked in a long loaf pan and served in slices similar to pound cake.

For a more elegant version, I bake the cake in three 8" layer pans and decorate simply with a light coat of Almond Cream Cheese Icing around the sides. This modern method exposes the beautiful golden cake layers and allows the tasty almond filling to be the star with seasonal garnish on top.

INGREDIENTS

4 large eggs	2½ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup butter, very soft (<i>not unsalted</i>)	1 tsp. baking powder (aluminum free)
2½ cups sugar	1 1/3 cups milk
1 Tbsp. almond extract	
or almond bakery emulsion	

DIRECTIONS

1. Set eggs, butter, and milk on the counter for several hours overnight to bring to room temperature.
2. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour three 8" round cake pans. For a uniform crust and to ensure the layers will come out smoothly, I use a spray called Baker's Joy on the cake pans. Cut a circle of parchment paper to line the bottom of the pan, then spray Baker's Joy over the parchment as well.
3. Separate eggs. Place yolks in a large mixing bowl of an electric stand mixer. In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Set aside.
4. Add butter and sugar to mixing bowl and beat until very smooth. Add almond extract and mix again.
5. Stir baking powder into flour. Add about half of the flour to the mixer bowl. Begin mixing at a low speed, while carefully pouring about half of the milk into the bowl. Once ingredients begin to combine, add remaining flour and milk as before. Continue mixing until batter is smooth.
6. Gently fold beaten egg whites into the batter.
7. Measure two cups of batter into each pan.
8. Bake for 26-29 minutes. Cake will pull away from the edges of the pan and spring back when lightly touched.
9. Allow cake to cool in the pans for ten minutes.
10. Turn each layer out separately on cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and allow to cool completely.

ALMOND CUSTARD FILLING

INGREDIENTS

½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. whipping cream	1 Tbsp. cold butter
¼ cup sugar	2 large eggs, yolks only
3½ Tbsp. Almond Paste (<i>Odense brand comes in a 7 ounce tube</i>)	

DIRECTIONS

1. Place ½ cup whipping cream, sugar, and almond paste in a small saucepan over medium low heat. Gently stir until almond paste melts and mixture is smooth.
2. When almond paste is completely melted, remove from heat and stir in butter. This will slightly cool the cream mixture.
3. Separate eggs (*save egg whites for another use*). Use a fork to lightly beat yolks with 2 Tbsp. cream.
4. Begin whisking melted almond paste mixture and very slowly pour egg yolks into the saucepan, whisking as you pour.
5. Return pan to burner. Continue stirring and bring mixture to boil over medium heat. Allow to boil for 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly, until custard thickens. Don't be tempted to turn up the heat to speed up the process. This will cook the egg yolks too quickly and curdle the custard.
6. Remove custard from heat and pour into a separate dish. Cool in the refrigerator until you are ready to assemble the cake.

Note: This recipe makes one cup of custard, which is enough filling for two cakes. Place the extra half cup of custard in an airtight container and freeze until you make the cake again.



ALMOND CREAM CHEESE ICING

INGREDIENTS

4 Tbsp. butter, softened (*not unsalted*)
4 ounces cream cheese, softened
¼ cup whipping cream

½ tsp. pure vanilla extract
½ tsp. almond extract
2¼ cups powdered sugar

DIRECTIONS

1. Using an electric mixer, cream butter and cream cheese together until smooth.
2. Add whipping cream with vanilla and almond extract. Mix again.
3. Spoon powdered sugar into the mixing bowl. Beat on low speed just until powdered sugar is mixed in, then increase the speed and beat until fluffy.



ASSEMBLING THE CAKE

1. Place first layer on a cake plate with crust side up.
2. Scoop a ¼ cup of Almond Custard Filling at the center of the cake layer. Using an offset icing spatula, spread the filling evenly over cake. Avoid spreading the filling to the edge of the cake. It's best to leave about ½" around the perimeter.
3. Sprinkle ¼ cup sliced almonds over the filling.
4. Place a second cake layer on top, with crust side up. Repeat Steps 2 and 3, spreading ¼ cup of the filling over the second layer and topping with ¼ cup sliced almonds.
5. Place the third layer of cake on top with crust side up.
6. With a long offset spatula spread Almond Cream Cheese Icing around sides of the cake. Smooth the icing gently, being careful not to scrape the cake and make crumbs.
7. Place a large dollop of icing on the top layer. Evenly spread icing with a small offset spatula. The icing on the top layer should be thicker than the sides of the cake.
8. Garnish cake with cinnamon sticks, dried orange slices, and pine sprigs. (*Remove before serving.*)