

Queen Mother's Cake

Ingredients

- 170g almonds, skinned
- 170g semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 150g sugar, divided
- 170g butter
- 6 eggs, separated
- pinch
- 5ml lemon juice
- 30g powdered sugar for dusting

Preparation

1. Toast the almonds in a single layer in a shallow pan in a 180°C oven for 12 to 15 minutes, shaking the pan a few times, until the almonds are lightly colored and give off a delicious smell of toasted almond when you open the door. Set aside to cool.
2. Adjust a rack one-third up in the oven and preheat oven to 190°C.
3. Butter the bottom and sides of a 923cm x 8cm springform pan and line the bottom with a round of baking-pan liner paper cut to fit. Butter the paper. Set the prepared pan aside.
4. Place the chocolate in the top of a small double boiler over warm water on moderate heat. Cover until partially melted, then uncover and stir until just melted and smooth. Remove the top of the double boiler and set aside until tepid or room temperature.
5. Place the almonds and ¼ cup of the sugar (reserve remaining ½ cup sugar) in a food processor fitted with a metal chopping blade. Process very well until the nuts are fine and powdery. Stop the machine once or twice, scrape down the sides, and continue to process. Process for at least a full minute. Set aside the ground nuts.
6. In the large bowl of an electric mixer beat the butter until soft. Add ¼ cup of the sugar (reserve the remaining ¼ cup sugar) and beat to mix.
7. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, beating and scraping the sides of the bowl as necessary until smooth.
8. On low speed add the chocolate and beat until mixed.
9. Then add the processed almonds and beat, scraping the bowl, until incorporated. Transfer this mixture to another bowl and wash and completely dry your stand-mixer bowl.
10. In the clean bowl of the mixer, with clean beaters, beat the egg whites with the salt and lemon juice, starting on low speed and increasing it gradually. When the whites barely hold a soft shape, reduce the speed a bit and gradually add the remaining ¼ cup sugar. Then, on high speed, continue to beat until the whites hold a straight point when the beaters are slowly raised. Do not over-beat.
11. Stir a large spoonful of the whites into the chocolate mixture to soften it a bit. Then, in three additions, fold in the remaining whites. Do not fold thoroughly until the last addition and do not handle more than necessary.
12. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan, using a knife to gently level the batter.

13. Bake for 20 minutes at 190°C and then reduce temperature to 180°C and continue to bake for an additional 50 minutes, a total baking time of 1 hour and 10 minutes. Keep an eye on it and do not over-bake. The cake should remain soft and moist in the center, and the top might crack a bit and that is perfectly fine.
14. Wet and slightly wring out a folded towel and place it on a smooth surface. Remove the cake pan from the oven and place it on the wet towel. Let stand until tepid, 50 to 60 minutes.
15. Release and remove the sides of the pan but do not cut around the sides with a knife as this will make the rim of the cake messy.
16. Let the cake stand until it is completely cool. The cake will sink a little in the middle, and the sides will be a little higher.
17. Place a rack or a small board over the cake and carefully invert. Remove the bottom of the pan and the paper lining and invert bak onto serving plate.
18. Using a sifter, gently dust the top of the cake with powdered sugar.