

Crystal Almond Pound Cake

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The Simple Art of Perfect Baking by Flo Braker

3/4 cup (75 g) sifted cake flour (use all-purpose flour at high elevation)
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/8 tsp salt
1 lemon, zest of
1 orange, zest of
5 large eggs, room temperature
1 tsp vanilla
7 oz. (3/4 cup) almond paste, room temperature
1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
8 oz. (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature

citrus glaze

3 tbsps lemon juice
3 tbsps orange juice
3/4 cup (150 g) granulated sugar

Position rack in lower third of oven; preheat to 350°F. Grease the bottom and sides of a 8.5 inch tube pan or other 7- to 8-cup decorative baking pan with solid shortening. Dust generously with all-purpose flour, tilt to coat evenly and tap out the excess.

Pour the flour, baking powder, and salt in that order into a triple sifter. Sift onto a sheet of waxed paper to distribute the ingredients evenly; set aside. Grate lemon and orange rinds for the zests; set aside. Crack eggs into a small bowl and add the vanilla. Whisk together briefly just to combine yolks and whites. Place the almond paste in the bowl of a heavy-duty mixer.

With the paddle attachment on low speed (#2), break up the almond paste for about 30 seconds. Maintaining the same speed, slowly add the 1 cup of sugar in a steady stream and beat until incorporated (if you add the sugar too quickly, the almond paste jumps out of the mixing bowl). Continue on low speed while adding the butter one tablespoon at a time, taking about 1 minute. Stop the machine after all of the butter has been added, and scrape the sides of the bowl. Increase speed to medium and cream until the mixture is lighter in color and fluffy in appearance (about 3 to 4 minutes).

With mixer still on medium speed, pour the egg mixture in a little at a time (tablespoon by tablespoon). Don't add more egg until the previous addition has been incorporated into the batter. If the batter gets too watery or shiny, increase the speed until it is smooth and silky, then return to medium speed and resume adding egg mixture. Continue mixing, stopping to scrape the sides of the bowl at least once. When batter is fluffy, velvety, and white (mine was always beige), and has increased in volume (after about 2-3 minutes), detach the beater from the bowl.

Use a rubber spatula to stir in the zests. Stir in half of the flour mixture until incorporated. Then stir in the other half, mixing until smooth. Pour the batter into the pan and bake for 45-50 minutes or until the sides begin to contract from the sides of the pan, the cake springs back when lightly touched and a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Place the cake on a rack to cool for 5 to 7 minutes. Mix the glaze ingredients together in a small bowl. Turn the cake out of the pan onto a cooling rack (take care that it isn't stuck – loosen with a metal spatula if necessary) positioned over a baking sheet to catch drips. Brush the entire surface of the cake with all of the glaze. Let the cake sit for at least 4 hours or until the glaze has set like a sheet of crystals (oops, I didn't do this) before moving it from the cooling rack to a plate. Serve at room temperature.