

Strawberry Chiffon and Buttercream Cake

<http://userealbutter.com/2009/05/06/strawberry-chiffon-buttercream-cake-recipe/>
parts of this recipe are scattered through the blog, so I'm compiling it all here for once

strawberry chiffon cake (2 9-inch rounds)
strawberry Swiss meringue buttercream frosting
2 cups strawberry purée
1/2 cup Grand Marnier (more as needed)

strawberry purée

1 lb. fresh ripe strawberries
2 tbsps sugar (or more to taste)
1/2 tsp lemon juice

Wash berries and trim the tops off. Freeze the berries solid. Completely thaw the berries and then purée in a blender or food processor. Place the purée in a medium saucepan with the sugar and lemon juice over medium heat. Stir occasionally until the purée comes to a boil. Stir while boiling until the purée thickens and darkens slightly (about 2 minutes or so). Remove from heat and let cool completely.

strawberry chiffon cake

makes two 9x3-inch rounds

14.5 oz. cake flour
8.75 oz. confectioner's sugar
6.75 oz. whole milk
6 oz. canola oil
3.25 oz. eggs
0.5 oz. baking powder (omit at 8500 ft.)
13 oz. egg whites
9.5 oz. granulated sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
3-4 oz. strawberry purée or 2 tbsps powdered freeze-dried strawberries

Oven 375°F. Prep pans brushing melted butter on the bottoms and sides. Line the base of each pan with parchment rounds and butter the parchment. Sift cake flour, confectioner's sugar, baking powder (if using), and powdered freeze-dried strawberries (if using) into a large bowl. Stir the milk, oil, eggs (except the 13 oz. of egg whites), vanilla extract, and if using, the strawberry purée into the dry ingredients until combined. In a separate bowl, whip the egg whites and granulated sugar to medium peaks. Gently fold the whipped meringue into the batter, a quarter at a time. If you add it all at once, the thick batter will deflate the meringue.

Divvy the batter between the two prepared pans. Bake until set. Start to check at 25 minutes by inserting a toothpick into the center of the cake. The cake is ready when the center comes out clean. For 9x3-inch pans, make sure the toothpick goes deep enough as the center takes much longer to bake through (probably closer to 40 minutes for me). Remove from oven and remove from pan. Let cool on a rack. Wrap the cakes in plastic and freeze (I don't do this, I let them cool on the rack and then cut them). You will either be able to get 3 layers from one cake, or four layers from two cakes... it all depends on how tall you want your cake and how many layers of cake you want (I prefer 4 layers). After two hours, remove cake from freezer and cut into 3 layers with a sharp serrated knife – or if you used 9x2-inch pans, cut two layers from each cake.

strawberry swiss meringue buttercream

8 oz. egg whites

16 oz. sugar

1 lb. butter, room temperature

4 oz. strawberry purée or 2-3 tbsps of powdered freeze-dried strawberries

Combine egg whites and sugar in a Kitchenaid mixing bowl. Whisk constantly over a gently simmering hot water bath until 140°F is reached. Remove from heat. Set the bowl on the mixer and using the whisk attachment, whip until stiff. Turn down speed to 3rd and whip until cool to the touch (this takes a while – should be cooler than your hand). Change to a paddle and gradually add soft butter by tablespoon pieces. Mix to emulsify. Once desired consistency has been reached, add purée and mix well.

Assembly: Set first cake layer, cut-side up, on a serving plate with wax paper strips tucked partly under the edges of the cake. Drizzle or squeeze (if using squeeze bottle) Grand Marnier evenly over the cake. Spread a layer of buttercream over the cake, then spread a thin layer of purée on top. Repeat cake, Grand Marnier, buttercream, and purée again and then top with the last layer of cake – or go for four layers which is **awesome**. Crumb coat the sides of the cake with buttercream. Refrigerate for an hour. Remove cake from refrigerator and finish frosting the entire cake with remaining buttercream. Garnish with fresh strawberries. Serve at room temperature.