

Homemade Angel Food Cake

Poetry & Pies

prep time: 15-20 minutes

bake time: 40-50 minutes

total time: 1 hour, 10 minutes (plus 2-3 hours cooling time)

servings: 12-16



Ingredients

- half a lemon
- 1 ½ cups (300g) sugar
- 1 cup (128g) cake flour*
- 12 egg whites, room temperature**
- ¼ teaspoon (2g) sea salt
- 1 tablespoon (13g) pure vanilla extract
- 1 ½ teaspoons (5g) cream of tartar
- equipment: fine mesh sieve or similar sifting device

Instructions

Note: be sure to follow the steps as written so you have everything in its place and ready to go, as you do have to work somewhat quickly once you begin whipping the egg whites.

1. Preheat oven to 325 and make sure your oven rack is one rung below the middle. Have your [angel food cake pan](#) (ideally with a removable bottom) out, but do not grease it.
2. Using half of a lemon like a sponge, wipe down your mixing bowl and whisk attachment, rinse and dry, then wipe it all down a second time. This only takes about a minute, and you can even squeeze most of the lemon juice to save for later and just use the mostly-squeezed lemon half to do this. But don't skip it! You need ALL traces of fat gone from the bowl and whisk before you try to beat those egg whites.
3. Using a food processor or blender, pulse the sugar until very fine (somewhere between granulated and powdered sugar). Pour about half of it into a small bowl for step 6.

4. Take the other half of the sugar and whisk it with the cake flour then sift everything twice (this does require two bowls). Set aside. Keep the [sieve](#) out to use after the egg whites whip up.
5. Place the egg whites, salt, vanilla, and cream of tartar into the bowl of your wiped-down stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat on medium for about a minute, until frothy. Turn the mixer to medium-high (I have a ten speed mixer and used setting 8). Watch the whites carefully.
6. Once the whites turn white and just begin to form very soft peaks, begin adding the sugar, one tablespoon at a time. Try to pour each tablespoon gently so it doesn't clump up. You can do this continuously without much pausing between additions. Continue beating until glossy with stiff peaks. *Optional: once all the sugar is added, stop the mixer and gently run a rubber spatula just along the top edge of the whites to help bring them into the mixture then continue mixing until glossy with stiff peaks. Each mixer is different, and some tend to not pull in what's on the edge as well as others.*
7. Once stiff peaks are formed and the egg whites are glossy (not long after the sugar is done being added, so watch carefully), turn off the mixer. Tap the whisk attachment on the side to get the egg whites off. Using the fine mesh sieve, sift $\frac{1}{3}$ of the flour mixture over the top of the bowl. Gently this together using a rubber spatula. Sift the next $\frac{1}{3}$ over the bowl and fold it in, followed by the final $\frac{1}{3}$. You only need to fold it until the flour is incorporated. Don't worry if it seems a little grainy.
8. Gently scoop it into your pan, being sure to spread it evenly on the bottom. You don't want an air bubble in the bottom corner, since this is usually presented as the top of your cake. I suggest scooping about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the batter into the pan, spreading it evenly to fill the corners, then continue with the rest of the batter. Smooth the top with your spatula.
9. Bake 40-50 minutes (climate and individual ovens vary), until the top is a nice golden brown and springs back when you press your finger into it. It may not spring back all quickly and happily like a pogo stick, but if it rises back up to you, it's done.
10. Once done baking, take a glass bottle and insert the neck into the middle hole of your cake pan. Then, using oven mitts, turn the whole thing upside down so that the cake pan is suspended upside down on the bottle. It will tilt to the side but shouldn't fall over (although try to put it somewhere safe in case it is knocked down). Let cool 2-3 hours.

11. Once it is completely cool to the touch, gently remove the cake from the pan, running a very sharp, long knife along the inner and outer edges of the pan then also along the bottom if you have a removable bottom pan.

Enjoy!

To serve, slice swiftly and without pressing down too hard, with a very sharp serrated knife. Serve with berries and whipped cream. Or, try drizzling [homemade jam](#), [coulis](#), or [chocolate sauce](#)!

Store, wrapped well or in an airtight container, for 3-5 days.

*You can make your own cake flour by putting 2 tablespoons cornstarch in your 1 cup measuring spoon then gently spooning in enough all-purpose flour to equal 1 cup (level it off with the back of a knife and don't pack it in). Whisk it all together then sift 3 times before using. Crazy, but it makes a difference. **However**, I've never tried this recipe with homemade cake flour so I cannot guarantee it will be as fluffy.

**Save the yolks to make [Bavarian cream filling](#), [lemon curd/lemon curd pie](#), [blueberry clementine curd](#), [pumpkin creme anglaise](#), [clementine pastry cream](#), or [blood orange tart](#) (the crust and filling use yolks, and for the filling you can actually sub 2 more yolks for one of the eggs).