

Vanilla Latte Cake

Poetry & Pies

prep time: 40-45 minutes

bake time: 25-30 minutes

total time: 1 hour, 15 minutes (plus about 1 hour cooling time)

servings: 12-16



Ingredients

for the coffee cake layers

- 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons (289g) flour, spooned and leveled then sifted
- 2 teaspoons (8g) baking powder, sifted
- ½ teaspoon (3g) ground sea salt
- ¾ cup (170g or 12 tablespoons) unsalted European style butter, room temperature
- 1 cup (200g) packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup (100g) granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons (neutral oil (avocado is best, vegetable or canola will do)
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- ¾ cup whole milk, room temperature
- ¼ cup very, very strong coffee or double shot of espresso (see note below if subbing instant coffee)

for the [coffee buttercream](#)

- 1 ½ cups (340g) unsalted butter*, softened
- 4-5 cups (520-650g) powdered sugar
- ¼ teaspoon (2g) finely ground sea salt (or to taste)
- 1 tablespoon (13g) pure vanilla extract
- ½ tablespoon (3g) [instant coffee](#) or espresso (or to taste)
- 2 tablespoons (28g) boiling water
- up to 4 tablespoons (56g) heavy whipping cream, optional (use only as needed)

for the vanilla whipped cream

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- ¼ cup (32g) powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon (13g) pure vanilla extract

Instructions

make the coffee cake layers

1. Preheat the oven to 325F/165C. Grease and flour two or three [8" or 9" cake pans](#) or three to four [6" cake pans](#) (or use [baking spray](#)) and line with [parchment paper](#) (or use [silicone liners](#)).

Note: *I like to use 3 cake pans to make room for more filling without having to cut the cake in half, which I'm terrible at. If you want to make a 6" cake, you need to use at least 3 pans or they will be overfilled and your cakes won't bake evenly.*

1. In a medium mixing bowl, use a [large fine mesh sieve](#) to sift then whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Don't skip sifting the flour and baking powder, as that will drastically affect the texture of the cake. As well, be sure to spoon then level your flour so you don't pack it in. Set aside.
2. In the bowl of your stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or in a large mixing bowl and using hand beaters), beat the butter until smooth. Add the sugars and beat on high until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes, scraping the bowl as needed.
3. Add the eggs one at a time, beating on medium until well blended and scraping the bowl after each egg. Add the oil and vanilla extract and beat on medium until well blended, about 1 minute.
4. Make your strong espresso shot or coffee (see note for using instant coffee or espresso)*. Add to the milk. You want 1 cup total of coffee/milk, so if you end up with extra, be sure to set that aside for a miniature pick-me-up and don't add it to the batter.
5. Add half of the flour to the butter/egg mixture and beat on low until *just barely* combined. Add the milk/coffee and beat on low until *just barely* combined. Then add the rest of the flour and beat on low until *just barely* combined. Scrape down the bowl then mix on low for 2-3 seconds just to combine all batter.
6. Divide evenly between prepared pans and spread evenly. Bake for 25-30 minutes (less if using 3 or more pans), until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out with a few moist crumbs. Begin checking cake around 15 minutes, and rotate at this time if not using convection. You want to catch it at the sweet spot between raw batter and no crumbs (which means it's overbaked).

7. Let cakes cool in the pan 5-10 minutes then remove to a cooling rack until completely cooled.

make the coffee buttercream (if not made in advance)

8. In a small bowl, combine instant coffee or espresso with the boiling water. Stir until dissolved and smooth. Set aside to cool.
9. Either in the bowl of your stand mixer, fitted with a paddle attachment, or in a large mixing bowl and using a hand mixer, beat butter on high until very smooth, about 30 seconds. Be sure the butter is soft but still matte looking. If it's shiny, it's over-softened and needs to go back in the fridge for a few minutes.
10. Add powdered sugar, one cup at a time, beating on low then increasing to high until smooth, about 1 minute. Stop after you've added 4 cups. You can add more at the end, if needed. Scrape the bowl.
11. Add the vanilla, salt, and half of the cooled coffee. Beat on low until somewhat combined then on high until smooth and fully combined.
12. Taste buttercream. If you'd like a stronger coffee taste, stir a little more of the coffee, until you're happy with the taste. At the sametime, add up to 1 more cup of powdered sugar if it needs more sweetness. If you don't want any more of a coffee taste but need to smooth out the frosting, you can add some heavy whipping cream, one tablespoon at a time, until smooth and nicely spreadable.
13. Once the flavor and texture are to our liking, beat on high for about a minute, to fluff up the frosting. Then stir vigorously with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula for another minute to release the air bubbles.

make the vanilla whipped cream

14. Combine the heavy cream, powdered sugar, and vanilla in a large, chilled mixing bowl. Whisk gently to combine. Taste, adjusting sugar or vanilla until desired taste is reached (only add more vanilla in small amounts, about ½ teaspoon at a time, to avoid it overpowering the flavor).
15. Whisk vigorously (or use a hand/stand mixer with the whisk attachment) until stiff peaks begin to form.

assemble your cake

16. If you made the buttercream ahead of time, you may need to stir or beat it for a minute to make it pliable. Fill the cake by spreading a thin layer of buttercream on the

bottom cake layer. Build a ring of buttercream around the edge using a piping bag or plastic baggie with a corner cut off. Fill with vanilla whipped cream.

17. If your house is warm, it may be easiest to frost the top of the next layer of cake while it's on the cooling rack then transfer it with a large spatula or cake lifter. That way you don't cause the layers to separate as you spread buttercream on the upper layers.
18. Once all layers are added, frost a thin crumb coat of buttercream then chill for at least 20 minutes to set. Frost with desired amount of buttercream (I used almost all of it--so good!). Chill until set.

Enjoy!

Keep cake refrigerated until 10-30 minutes before serving. Alternatively, I found it easiest to cut it while chilled then let each slice warm up for 10 minutes on the counter. Store leftovers in the fridge, placing a piece of plastic directly against any cut edges then covering the whole thing with plastic wrap or storing in an airtight cake holder. Leftovers will last 3-5 days in the fridge.

**You can create your 1 cup of milk and coffee by combining one cup of whole milk with 1 tablespoon [instant coffee](#) or espresso (use high quality!). Do this when you take the milk out to warm up (same time as the eggs and butter). It might clump up a bit, so you may need to let it rest then whisk again later until it's blended. I used up the last of my espresso powder in my [coffee buttercream](#), so I had to go the strong espresso shot route, which still worked perfectly.*