

TIERS OF *Joy*

THEY'LL ALL WANT SECONDS, AND YOU KNOW WHAT? It's okay. Our wedding cake serves 125 and is only 282 calories a slice, with a mere 5.7 grams of fat. "For batter or for worse" and "If anyone here objects to this cake, speak now or forever hold your peace" were our Test Kitchens' mottos. We tested, retested, and re-retested our recipe until there wasn't one "Hmm, not quite there" to be heard. And so, without reservations, we present—*dum dum de dum dum dum*—our Fresh Orange Wedding Cake with Apricot Mousse Filling and Buttercream Frosting. One thing, since a wedding is such a rare occasion in one's life, we do offer the choice of using butter instead of margarine in the icing (although if your marital track record's not so great, you may want to stick with the margarine). Honestly, we felt that the margarine tasted better than the butter. Also, the cake, filling, and frosting recipes can easily be scaled down to make cakes for other special occasions. In fact, we think you should hold onto this recipe for birthdays, graduations, lottery wins, and other celebratory events—your golden wedding anniversary among them.



Recipes by Susan G. Purdy

A
LIGHTENED
cake that's
RICH IN TASTE
and beautiful
TO BEHOLD

PHOTOGRAPHY: HOWARD L. PUCKETT / STYLING: CINDY MANNING BARR / FOOD STYLING: PATTI PAYNE



- READ THIS FIRST -
*Before you begin to make
the wedding cake*

Plan ahead. Read through the entire recipe and Equipment Checklist.

Allow an entire afternoon to bake, cool, wrap, and refrigerate or freeze the cake layers. Allow a couple of hours to prepare the apricot filling. The frosting is best made the day of the wedding or the day before.

These instructions will help you get started. The Basic Cake Recipe yields about 5½ cups batter. You will need enough ingredients to prepare the Basic Cake Recipe seven times. This will require 1 cup of freshly grated orange rind or ½ cup dried orange rind (buy two jars). Specifically, you will need to make:

- 2 (14-inch) cake layers, which requires making the Basic Cake Recipe four times
- 2 (10-inch) cake layers, which requires making the Basic Cake Recipe two times
- 1 (6-inch) cake layer, which requires making the Basic Cake Recipe just once
- 1 batch of Apricot Mousse Filling
- 5 batches of Buttercream Frosting

FRESH ORANGE WEDDING CAKE

Basic Cake Recipe:

- Vegetable cooking spray
- 2½ cups sifted cake flour
- 2¼ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup plain nonfat yogurt
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons grated orange rind (about 6 oranges)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons orange extract
- 1 egg yolk
- 1½ cups sugar, divided
- ¾ cup warm 2% low-fat milk (95° to 100°)
- 4 egg whites

Coat bottom of 1 (10-inch) round cake pan with cooking spray (do not coat sides of pan); line bottom with wax

paper. Coat wax paper with cooking spray, and dust with flour; set aside.

Sift together 2½ cups flour, baking powder, and salt; set aside. Combine yogurt and next 5 ingredients (yogurt through egg yolk) in a large bowl; beat at medium speed of a mixer until blended. Add 1 cup sugar, and beat well. Gradually add the milk, beating at medium-low speed 2 minutes or until sugar dissolves.

Beat egg whites (at room temperature) at high speed until foamy. Gradually add the remaining ½ cup sugar, beating mixture until stiff peaks begin to form. Add the flour mixture and egg white mixture alternately to the yogurt mixture, beating at low speed.

Pour the batter into prepared pan. Sharply tap pan once on counter to remove air bubbles. Bake at 375° for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°, and bake 28 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Let cool in pan 10 minutes on a wire rack. Loosen cake from sides of pan, using a narrow metal spatula, and turn out onto wire rack. Peel off wax paper, and let cool completely.

Wrap cooled cake in heavy-duty plastic wrap and then in heavy-duty aluminum foil. Refrigerate up to 2 days or freeze up to 2 weeks (to thaw, place the wrapped cake in refrigerator overnight). Yield: 1 (10-inch) cake layer. *You will need 2 (10-inch) cake layers to make our wedding cake.*

Note: Substitute dried orange peel for the grated orange rind, if desired. Combine ¼ cup of orange juice and

1½ tablespoons dried orange peel in a small glass bowl. Microwave at HIGH for 1 minute. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Do not drain; add to the yogurt mixture.

Instructions for making 1 (14-inch) cake layer (you will need 2 [14-inch] cake layers to make our wedding cake):

Coat bottom of pan with cooking spray (do not coat sides of pan); line bottom with wax paper. Coat wax paper with cooking spray, and dust with flour. Double Basic Cake Recipe; pour into prepared pan. Bake at 375° for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°, and bake 28 minutes.

Instructions for making 2 (6-inch) cake layers (you will need only 1 [6-inch] cake layer to make our wedding cake):

Coat bottoms of pans with cooking spray (do not coat sides of pan); line bottoms with wax paper. Coat wax paper with cooking spray, and dust with flour. Prepare Basic Cake Recipe; divide batter evenly between pans. Bake at 375° for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°, and bake 25 minutes.

High Altitude Adjustment:

Follow instructions for Basic Cake Recipe except beat egg whites to soft peaks instead of stiff peaks.

Apricot Mousse Filling:

- 4½ cups fresh orange juice, divided
- 4 cups dried whole apricots (about 16 ounces)
- 4 envelopes unflavored gelatin
- 4 egg whites



- 3 cups sugar
- ½ cup water
- 4 teaspoons light-colored corn syrup
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Combine 2½ cups orange juice and the apricots in a large nonaluminum saucepan; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes or until apricots are tender.

Combine ¼ cup orange juice and half of the apricot mixture in a blender or food processor, and process until smooth; pour into an extra-large bowl. Repeat procedure with remaining apricot mixture and ¼ cup orange juice, except leave mixture in blender.

Sprinkle the gelatin over remaining

1½ cups orange juice in a saucepan; let stand 1 minute. Cook over low heat 10 minutes, stirring until gelatin dissolves. Add gelatin mixture to apricot mixture in blender, and process until smooth. Add to the apricot mixture in bowl, stirring until well-blended. Place bowl over another extra-large bowl filled with ice; let stand until apricot mixture is chilled and thickened (about 30 minutes), stirring frequently and scraping sides of bowl. (If mixture sets up too much, whisk it until it becomes like pudding again.) Remove bowl from ice.

Combine egg whites (at room temperature), sugar, water, and corn syrup in an extra-large straight-sided bowl. Place bowl over simmering water in a large saucepan (water should not touch bottom of bowl). Beat egg white mixture at medium speed of a mixer 7 minutes. Increase speed to high; beat for 10 minutes or until mixture is smooth and satiny and stiff peaks begin to form. Remove bowl from simmering water; beat in vanilla.

Fold egg white mixture into apricot mixture; cover and chill at least 8 hours or up to 4 days. Yield: 12 cups.

Buttercream Frosting:

- ⅓ cup stick margarine or butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons nonfat cream cheese, softened
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- Dash of salt
- 4½ cups sifted powdered sugar (about 17 ounces)
- 5 teaspoons skim milk

Cream margarine and cream cheese at medium speed of a mixer until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and salt; beat well. Gradually add sugar and milk, beating at low speed. Increase speed to high, and beat until well-blended and spreadable. Yield: 2 cups.

Note: Avoid making more than 6 cups of frosting in one batch or it will be difficult to beat using a hand-held mixer. If frosting is made ahead and chilled, add a small amount of milk, a teaspoon at a time, and beat until spreadable.

This cake serves about 125 people. The nutritional analysis is based on a single slice.

CALORIES 282 (18% from fat); PROTEIN 3g; FAT 5.7g (sat 1.2g, mono 2g, poly 2.1g); CARB 54.8g; FIBER 0.1g; CHOL 11mg; IRON 1.3mg; SODIUM 96mg; CALC 61mg

BAKING TIPS

- Don't coat the sides of the cake pans with cooking spray. The cake needs to cling to the sides as it bakes, which allows it to rise higher and gives it a smoother crust.
- When separating the eggs, do them one at a time into a custard cup, and pour whites into your mixing bowl. This prevents you from having to start over if some yolk happens to get into the whites. Eggs are easier to separate right out of the refrigerator; however, for better volume, let them come to room temperature before beating.
- Bake the cake layers in this order: 1 (14-inch), 1 (10-inch), 2 (6-inch), 1 (14-inch), and 1 (10-inch).
- Use real vanilla and orange extracts instead of imitation.
- Use fresh orange juice for the best flavor.
- To prevent the top crust of each cake layer from sticking to the plastic wrap while it's being stored, lightly dust the plastic wrap with flour.

PREPARING THE LAYERS

1. Slice rounded top off each cake layer with a serrated knife so the top of each layer is flat. Cut each cake layer in half horizontally. Lift the top half off, using a broad spatula or the bottom of a tart pan, and place it on wax paper.
2. Cover 3 cardboard cake rounds (6, 10, and 14 inches in diameter) with aluminum foil. Center the 6-inch round on the 10-inch round, and poke a hole through both, using the tip of a knife or an ice pick. Stick a ¼-inch wooden dowel through both rounds to widen holes.
3. Spread a small amount of frosting in the center of the 14-inch cardboard round, and place 1 (14-inch) cake layer on top. Spread about 1½ cups Apricot Mousse Filling over surface of cake layer, spreading to within ½ inch of edge. Top with another 14-inch cake layer. Repeat the procedure with filling and remaining 14-inch layers, ending with cake.
4. Center the 10-inch cardboard round on top of the 14-inch tier. Using the tip of a sharp knife, trace around edge of

ASSEMBLING THE CAKE



1. To slice the cake in half evenly, insert toothpicks around the outside, marking the middle. Using a serrated knife, slice into the cake about 2 inches, using the toothpicks as a guide.



2. Wrap a long piece of dental floss around edge through cut; tie floss once. Slowly tighten the floss—it will make a clean, even cut through the cake, dividing it in half.



3. Spread apricot filling to within ½ inch of the edge.



4. Center a cardboard cake round on top of tier. Using the tip of a sharp knife, trace around edge of round; remove round. Cut 6 plastic straws equal to the height of the tier. Insert straws inside the perimeter of the marked circle, spacing evenly.



5. To "crumb coat" the cake, spread a very thin layer of frosting around sides and on top of the cake; chill. This seals in the crumbs, making it easier to spread the remaining frosting smoothly on the cake.



6. Center the cake tiers one on top of the other. Decorate the cake with remaining frosting, and pipe frosting around bottom layers to make an attractive border.

round; remove round. Cut 6 plastic straws equal to the height of the tier. Insert straws inside the perimeter of marked circle, spacing straws evenly to support the weight of the other tiers. Spread about 1½ cups Buttercream Frosting around sides of tier and about 1½ cups frosting over the top. (This small amount of frosting is just enough to coat the surface of the cake, sealing in the crumbs so that the second coat of frosting spreads smoothly.) Place the tier in the refrigerator until it's time to assemble the entire cake.

5. Assemble the 10-inch tier following the procedures used for the 14-inch tier, using a scant 1 cup filling between

each of the layers, 1⅓ cups frosting on the sides of the tier, and a scant 1 cup frosting over the top. Place tier in the refrigerator.

6. To assemble the (6-inch) tier, spread ⅓ cup filling over surface of 1 cake layer, and top with remaining layer. Spread about ¾ cup frosting on sides of tier and ⅓ cup frosting over the top. Place tier in the refrigerator.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. On the morning of the wedding or one day in advance, center the cake tiers one on top of the other.

2. Fit a pastry bag with a large coupler and a star tip. Spoon 1 cup frosting into bag; set aside. Spread remaining frosting decoratively over the cake.

3. With pastry bag, pipe a border around the bottom of each cake layer.

4. Sharpen one end of the wooden dowel; cut to the height of the cake. Carefully insert the sharpened end through the center of the 6-inch tier, down through the center of the cake, passing through the previously made holes in the cake rounds. (This will keep the cake from sliding sideways during transport.)

5. Decorate with flowers, if desired.

EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

First off, the most important thing you'll really need is a large, heavy-duty stand-up mixer. Here are some other supplies you'll use to make and assemble the wedding cake.

- 1 (14-inch) round cake pan with 2-inch-high straight sides
- 1 or 2 (10-inch) round cake pans with 2-inch-high straight sides
- 1 or 2 (6-inch) round cake pans with 2-inch-high straight sides
- blender or food processor
- large metal bowl that will fit over a large saucepan like a double boiler
- wax paper or parchment paper to line cake pans
- 1 or 2 large wire racks to cool cakes
- 3 cardboard cake rounds (6, 10, and 14 inches)
- toothpicks
- dental floss
- serrated knife with a 12- to 14-inch blade
- 1 (2-foot-long) wooden dowel, ¼-inch in diameter
- plastic straws

Mail-order sources for cake pans, cardboard cake rounds, and other baking supplies:

Sweet Celebrations, 800/328-6722

Wilton Enterprises Inc.,
708/963-7100, ext. 320

Williams-Sonoma, 800/541-1262

SPECIAL-OCCASION ORANGE LAYER CAKE

If you're not staging a wedding, you can make a four-layer cake for birthdays and other special occasions with this recipe. It uses the same cake and frosting recipes as the wedding cake but contains a different apricot filling that's simpler to make.

Basic Cake Recipe
Apricot-Orange Filling
Buttercream Frosting

Coat bottoms of 2 (8- or 9-inch) round cake pans with cooking spray (do not coat sides of pan); line bottom with wax paper. Coat wax paper with cooking spray, and dust with flour. Prepare Basic Cake Recipe, and pour into prepared pans. Bake at 375° for 20 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Let cool in pans 10 minutes on a wire rack. Loosen cake from sides of pans, using a narrow metal spatula, and turn out

onto wire rack. Peel off wax paper, and let cool completely.

Slice cake layers in half horizontally. Place one layer, cut side up, on a serving plate. Spread $\frac{2}{3}$ cup Apricot-Orange Filling over cake to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of edge. Repeat procedure with remaining cake layers and filling. Frost sides and top of cake with Buttercream Frosting. Yield: 20 servings (serving size: 1 slice).

CALORIES 326 (19% from fat); PROTEIN 2.9g; FAT 7g (sat 1.4g, mono 2.5g, poly 2.5g); CARB 63.8g; FIBER 0.2g; CHOL 12mg; IRON 1.3mg; SODIUM 103mg; CALC 53mg

Apricot-Orange Filling:

- 1½ cups fresh orange juice, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dried whole apricots (about 3 ounces)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 2½ tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons margarine
- 2½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Combine $\frac{3}{4}$ cup orange juice and apricots in a nonaluminum saucepan; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat,

and simmer 20 minutes or until apricots are tender. Spoon into a blender or food processor, and process until smooth.

Combine sugar and cornstarch in a saucepan. Gradually add remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup orange juice, stirring with a wire whisk until well-blended. Add the margarine; bring to a boil over medium heat, and cook 1 minute or until thickened, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; add apricot mixture and lemon juice. Pour into a bowl; cover and chill 4 hours. ❧

Award-winning veteran cookbook author Susan G. Purdy's latest book is entitled Have Your Cake and Eat It, Too: 200 Luscious, Low-Fat Cakes, Pies, Cookies, Puddings, and Other Desserts You Thought You Would Never Eat Again.

