

## Lemon Cake With Apricot Filling

### Ingredients:

#### **Cake layers**

Butter or cooking spray with flour  
3/4 cup sour cream  
1 tsp baking soda  
1/4 cup fresh orange juice  
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice  
Grated peel of 3 lemons  
1 3/4 cups cake flour  
2 tsp baking powder  
1/2 tsp salt  
1 1/2 sticks butter, room temperature  
1 1/4 cups sugar  
3 eggs, separated, room temperature

#### **Lemon syrup**

1/4 cup lemon juice  
1/2 cup sugar

#### **Lemon frosting**

2 cups heavy cream, chilled  
1 1/2 cups lemon curd

#### **Apricot filling**

2 small cans apricots (about 8.5oz each)  
1 tsp cornstarch  
1 tbsp butter  
2 tsp sugar  
Pinch salt  
Juice from half a lemon

#### **Lemon curd**

6 tbsp butter, softened  
1 cup sugar  
2 eggs  
2 egg yolks  
2/3 cup lemon juice  
2 tsp lemon zest

### Directions:

#### Cake layers

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Butter and flour 3 8-inch cake pans, or use a cooking spray with flour, such as Baker's Joy (available in the baking aisle of most supermarkets).
3. Mix sour cream and baking soda in a small bowl. Let stand 10 minutes.
4. Combine orange juice, lemon juice, and lemon peel.
5. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt.

6. Beat butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Add egg yolks and beat thoroughly.
7. Add  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the flour and mix just until incorporated. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  of juice mixture and continue to alternate with flour. Do not over mix. Incorporate sour cream.
8. Whisk egg whites to soft foamy peaks. Fold gently into batter.
9. Divide evenly between cake pans, smoothing top and bake until a wooden skewer inserted in center of each layer comes out clean, about 25 minutes.
10. Cool cake layers in pans on racks for 10 minutes. Invert onto rack and cool completely.

## Apricot filling

1. Drain apricots and chop briefly until it forms a coarse puree. Put in small saucepan.
2. Add remaining ingredients, bring to a boil, and then simmer about 8-10 minutes until thickened slightly.
3. Place in a bowl and refrigerate until well chilled.

## Lemon curd

If you do not want to make the lemon curd, buy a good-quality store product.

1. Beat the butter and sugar, about 2 minutes. Add eggs and yolks. Beat 1 minute.
2. Mix in the lemon juice. The mixture will look curdled but will come together when heated.
3. Put in a double boiler over low heat, stirring until mixture comes together. Increase heat to medium and cook until mixture thickens, stirring frequently, about 12-15 minutes. It should evenly coat the back of a wooden spoon. Do not allow to boil.
4. Remove from heat, add zest, and chill thoroughly.

## Lemon syrup

1. Combine lemon juice and sugar in a small saucepan.
2. Heat, stirring, until sugar dissolves. Let cool.

## Lemon frosting

1. Whip the heavy cream until it has soft billowy peaks.
2. Gently fold in the lemon curd.

## Assembly:

1. Place a cake layer on a plate. Brush syrup liberally over the top. Spread with half the apricot puree and then  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of frosting.
2. Put second layer on top and repeat process, ending with third layer. Spread remaining frosting over top and sides of cake.

Note: Cake can be made and assembled 1 day ahead and refrigerated. Bring to room temperature before eating. The lemon curd, apricot filling and lemon syrup can be made 2-3 days ahead and refrigerated.

**Baking Tips:**

Make sure the butter is at the correct temperature. It should yield gently to pressure. If it's too cold, it will not cream sufficiently.

The creaming of the butter and sugar is the most important step. For maximum aeration and volume of the cake, the butter and sugar must be beaten until very fluffy and almost white in color. If you are using a stand mixer, start the creaming process and then continue with the other steps. If using a hand held mixer, beat for about 5-6 minutes.

To bring eggs to room temperature quickly, place in a bowl of hot tap water for a few minutes.

Once flour has been added to the batter, any liquid added afterward can combine to form gluten. This will make the cake tough. Do not over mix at this point.

The first sign that a cake is almost done is a heavenly smell! If completely cooked, the cake should have pulled away from the sides of the pan. It should also spring back when you press the center gently with your finger. If an indentation remains, bake for a few more minutes.