

Boston Cream Pie (Maida Heatter's Recipe)

Makes a 9 inch filled cake

There are many recipes for Boston Cream Pie. This is the best I've ever had and it seems that's the opinion of Ms. Heatter as well. The cake is so light and tender. The secret is careful folding of the beaten egg whites and yolks and sifting the dry ingredients (the flour is sifted three times, once before measuring) twice: Once together and then again over the batter in about four additions. Make the pastry cream first to allow time for it to chill. I like to make the pastry cream the day before. It keeps "cake day" much easier. I also find it easier to use a hand held mixer for this cake and one small bowl for the whites and a larger one for the cake batter. A medium large sieve is the tool to use for sifting flour over batter.

Pastry Cream:

2	lg.	eggs
¼ c. +1 Tbl.		sifted all purpose flour
¼	tsp.	sea salt
⅔	c.	granulated sugar (superfine if available)
2	c.	whole milk
1	tsp.	pure vanilla extract
¼	tsp.	pure almond extract
2	Tbl.	unsalted butter, cut into small pieces (¼ stick or 1 oz.)

Beat the eggs in a bowl lightly just to mix and set aside. In a heavy 2 qt. saucepan, mix the flour, salt and sugar. Gradually whisk in milk, then cook, stirring constantly, over medium heat until the mixture comes to a boil and starts to thicken. Continue to stir and boil gently for a minute or two. The mixture should become as thick as a medium white sauce or about like vichyssoise. Remove the pan from the heat and with a ladle add about ½ cup of the hot mixture to the eggs, whisking to prevent lumps. Repeat, adding ½ cup at a time, until you have added about half of the hot mixture to the eggs. Then, very slowly and whisking constantly, stir the egg mixture back into the remaining hot milk mixture.

Place the saucepan back over low heat and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and whisk in extracts and butter. Immediately (to stop the cooking) pour the mixture into a bowl. Fit a piece of plastic wrap or wax paper on top of the pastry cream, touching the surface to prevent the formation of a "skin." Let stand until cool. Cover the entire bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour. This process can be sped up by placing the bowl in a larger bowl of ice and water before refrigerating.

Sponge Cake:

1	c.	sifted all purpose flour
1	tsp.	baking powder
3	lg.	eggs, separated
¼	tsp.	sea salt
⅔	c.	granulated sugar
1	tsp.	pure vanilla extract
1	Tbl.	fresh lemon juice (½ to 1 lemon)
2	Tbl.	cold tap water
3	Tbl.	unsalted butter, melted

Adjust oven rack to middle position and preheat oven to 350° F. Butter a 9 x 1 ½ inch round cake pan. Line the bottom with a round of parchment or wax paper cut to fit and then butter the paper. Dust the pan all over with fine, dry bread crumbs and invert the pan over paper and tap lightly to shake out excess crumbs. Set pan aside. Melt butter in a small saucepan and set aside.

Sift together the flour and baking powder and set aside. Beat the egg whites and salt in the small bowl of an electric mixer to soft peaks. Reduce the speed to moderate and gradually add ⅓ cup of

sugar. Increase mixer speed and continue to beat very briefly, only until the whites just hold a point when the beaters are raised. Do not let the whites become too stiff and dry. Scrape the beaters to remove any clinging meringue. Set aside.

Place the egg yolks in another bowl of the mixer. Beat briefly, then gradually all the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of sugar and beat at high speed until the mixture is very light, almost white, and fluffy. Beat in the vanilla and lemon juice; then on low speed add the cold tap water, scraping the bowl as necessary and beating only until the mixture is smooth. In about four additions, fold the whites into the yolks (do not handle more than necessary and do not be too thorough, especially with the first few additions). Place the dry ingredients into a sifter over the bowl, sifting with one hand and folding with the other. Add dry ingredients in about four or five additions and again do not handle any more than necessary. Add the now cooled but still liquid butter all at once and fold in gently until barely, but not absolutely, incorporated. Turn the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Bang sharply on the counter to remove air bubbles and bake for about 30 minutes or until the top springs back when pressed gently with a fingertip and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Start checking at about 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and, with a small, sharp knife, cut around the rim of the cake to release it from the pan. Let it stand on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Cover the pan with an additional rack and turn the cake and rack over and remove the cake pan. Cover with the original rack and turn the cake over so it is right side up but do not remove the paper lining. Cool completely.

Chill the cake in the freezer for about 30 minutes. Place the cake upside down on a flat plate. Remove the paper lining from the cake. Use a long, thin, sharp knife, preferably serrated, and carefully cut the cake into two even thin layers. Carefully remove the bottom and place it, cut side up, on a flat cake plate. Stir the pastry cream with a spoon and with a long, narrow metal spatula; spread the pastry cream to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the edges of the cake. Cover with the top layer and refrigerate while making the ganache for topping.

Chocolate Glaze (Ganache):

$\frac{1}{4}$ c. heavy whipping cream
4 oz. semi sweet chocolate, chopped course
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. pure almond extract
Dash sea salt

Heat cream over moderate heat in a small heavy saucepan until bubbles begin to form around the edges. Add the chocolate and the dash of salt, stir briefly, remove from heat and let sit for a minute or two and then stir until chocolate is completely melted and incorporated into the cream. The mixture should be completely smooth. Add almond extract and stir to incorporate. Let it sit for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, before using.

Remove the cake from the refrigerator, pour the glaze on to the cake and smooth just to the edge using a long, narrow metal spatula. Try to avoid having the glaze run down the sides of the cake, but if it does, leave it. Refrigerate until service. The recipe calls for serving the cake cold, but I prefer to serve it at room temperature and remove it from the refrigerator about an hour before service.