

Swedish Midsummer Strawberry Cake (Midsommartårta)

A glorious *cream cake* filled with fresh *strawberries* and served with more *strawberries* on the side. It is one of the highlights of summer in *Sweden*! There is no single recipe for the *cake*, but it always involves at least two layers and more usually three, pastry cream and whipped cream and lots of *strawberries and strawberry sauce*!

There are a lot of steps to this cake, but that is what makes it special and generally it takes two days to make this cake.

You may choose either of these cakes for your cake base.

Usually I make the cakes a day ahead but they can be made a week ahead and frozen too.

For the cake base: Basic Sponge Cake

Makes 3--- 9-inch layers

1 ½ stick butter melted and cooled

2 ¼ cups cake flour

2 teaspoons baking powder (optional?)

12 large eggs, room temperature separated

2 ¼ cups granulated sugar

2 teaspoon pure vanilla

Pinch of salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter three 9-inch round cake pans. Line bottoms with parchment; butter parchment and flour pans, tapping out excess flour. Whisk together egg yolks and 1 cup granulated sugar in a bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water until sugar has dissolved and mixture is warm, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat and beat with a mixer on medium-high speed until pale and thick enough to form a ribbon that dissolves onto itself, 3 to 5 minutes. Beat in vanilla and salt; transfer to a large bowl.

Beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Gradually add remaining 1/2 cup granulated sugar and beat on medium-high speed until stiff, glossy peaks form, about 2 minutes. Fold one third of egg whites into yolks, then gently fold in remaining whites. Sift flour over top and gently start to fold in. When nearly all is folded in, pour melted butter down side of bowl and fold just until incorporated and smooth.

Divide batter among pans and bake until a toothpick inserted in centers comes out clean, about 25 minutes for rounds, or 15 minutes for sheets, rotating and switching racks halfway through. If baking in round pans, immediately invert cake and remove parchment, then reinvert and cool right side up.

Or for the Cake base: a Genoise Cake

1 1/3 cups sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/3 cup orange juice

1/3 cup vegetable oil

6 large eggs separated

Preheat oven to 350F

Butter bottom and sides of a 10” springform pan. Line the bottom with a parchment circle, butter top and dust with flour.

Beat the yolks until smooth, add the oil and mix well. Stir in juice. Blend together 2/3 cup of the sugar, salt and baking powder.

Add to the yolks and mix until smooth. Slowly mix in the flour and mix until smooth and light.

Whip the white until frothy, continue whipping adding the sugar slowly. Whip until firm peaks form. Fold in yolk mixture into whites until evenly blended and all streaks are gone.

Spoon into prepared pan, level top, and bake at lowest rack in oven. Bake until golden brown and the top springs back about 40 minutes.

Cool in springform pan on a rack.

Lemon syrup—make day ahead

Juice of 1 lemon

½ cup sugar

½ cup water

Bring to boil

Remove from heat.

Cool store in refrigerator.

Fresh Strawberry sauce ---make a day ahead, this is a good basic strawberry sauce for pie too.

If you have strawberry freezer jam this would also work for your cake

1-quart fresh strawberries washed and blended until smooth (also you can use frozen strawberries to make this sauce)

½ cup sugar

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon unflavored gelatin powder or ½ sheet of organic gelatin

Combine lemon juice and gelatin; mix to dissolve gelatin. Set aside.

In a medium saucepan, combine blended strawberries and sugar. Place over medium-high heat and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 8 -10 min.

Add the gelatin-lemon mixture; stir to combine. Continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, for 5 - 7 more minutes, or until sauce is thickened. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature.

Keep in mind sauce will thicken up slightly as it cools and even more with refrigeration.

Note: Add 1 tablespoon of berry liqueur such as Creme de Cassis or Chambord to enhance the flavor.

Store in refrigerator overnight.

Pastry Cream Filling

2 cups milk

1 cup sugar

¼ cup corn starch

½ teaspoon salt

3 egg yolks

¼ cup butter

1 teaspoon vanilla

Place 2 cups milk into a saucepan, mix together the sugar and cornstarch and salt and add to the milk, stir to combine. Add three well beaten egg yolks. Bring up to a boil until mixture is thick and bubbly stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. Remove from heat and stir in butter and vanilla. Set aside to cool. Refrigerate overnight.

Mascarpone Cream filling

1-quart heavy cream

8 ounces mascarpone cheese at room temp

1 tablespoon corn starch

½ cup powdered sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

Break up mascarpone cheese and mix together with cream, sugar, cornstarch and vanilla on a mixer until it is stiff. Reserve until ready to use.

To Assemble the Cake

Choose a nice big cake plate

Have all your premade toppings at hand

1 to 2 quarts of fresh strawberries

Container of lemon syrup

Container of strawberry syrup

Bowl of pastry cream

Bowl of whipped cream mixture

Your cakes

Trim tops of cake

Place one layer on plate

Brush with lemon syrup

Spread a layer of pastry cream about ½" thick

Over the pastry cream, spread a layer of whip cream mixture, cover about ½" thick and then start to drop whipped cream mixture down the side of the cake, entirely covering first layer.

Slice on top of the cream a layer of fresh strawberries and drizzle strawberries with the strawberry sauce and cover with more mascarpone cream.

Add second layer and repeat.

Third layer cover with pastry cream and whipped cream and frost entire cake.

Chill in refrigerator 2 hours

Decorate sides using a pastry bag and make a decorative layer on the top of the cake.

Fill the center with fresh washed/dried strawberries with the stems on.

Make a decoration around the outside to hold berries in.

