

coconut lime cake

cake:

3 sticks butter (room temp)
2 cups sugar
5 eggs (room temp)
1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1 1/4 teaspoons pure almond extract
1 heaping Tablespoon fresh lime zest (~1 large lime)
3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting the pans
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup sweetened shredded coconut

frosting:

24 ounces cream cheese (room temp)
3 sticks butter (room temp)
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon pure almond extract
3-4 cups powdered sugar, sifted
1-2 cups sweetened shredded coconut

directions:

preheat oven to 350. grease 2 (8 or 9 inch - I used 8 for this cake) round cake pans, line them parchment paper, and then grease them again and dust lightly with flour. {Tip: for greasing, I like to use a paper towel and rub the end in butter before applying to the pan}. using an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar on medium-high speed for 3 to 5 minutes, until light yellow and fluffy. with the mixer on medium speed, add the eggs 1 at a time, scraping down the bowl once during mixing. add the vanilla and almond extracts, and lime zest. don't worry if the batter looks curdled; that's normal.

in a separate bowl, sift together: flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. with the mixer on low speed, alternately add the dry ingredients and the buttermilk to the batter in 3 parts, beginning and ending with dry ingredients. mix until just combined. fold in the coconut with a spatula.

pour the batter evenly into the 2 pans and smooth the top with a knife. bake in the center of the oven for 45 to 55 minutes, until the tops are browned and a cake tester comes out clean. cool on a baking rack for 30 minutes, then turn the cakes out onto a baking rack to finish cooling. cut each cake in half using a serrated knife (creating 4 layers). place each layer in a gallon ziplock bag, and freeze until ready to assemble. {tip: freezing the cake makes for easier assembly and frosting}

for the frosting, in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, combine the cream cheese, butter, vanilla and almond extract on low speed. add the powdered sugar and mix until smooth.

to assemble, put small pieces of wax paper around the perimeter of your cake plate. place 1 layer of (does not need to be thawed) cake on stand and spread 1/3 of the curd onto cake. place the second layer on top, again spreading 1/3 of curd. repeat with the 3rd layer. top with last layer (rounded side up). spread frosting generously on all sides and stop of cake. carefully pat all surface area with coconut. top with malted eggs and decorative birdies. let cake come to room temp (approximately 2 hours before serving) - it's helpful to cover with a glass cake dome or aluminum foil loosely to prevent drying. any remaining cake can be sliced and refrozen for later use. {tip: wrap each piece in wax paper and place inside an airtight glass/plastic container in freezer}

lime curd

6 large eggs, whisked
1 1/2 cups sugar
Pinch of salt
1 cup fresh lime juice
zest of 2 large or 4 small limes
4 tablespoons butter

in a medium saucepan (off of the heat), combine eggs, sugar, salt, juice, and zest (reserving 1 heaping Tablespoon for later). whisk well. you might notice the egg whites not completely incorporating. don't worry, it'll all be fine later. place over low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon until the mixture thickens (should resemble pudding or custard). remove from heat and stir in the butter. pour into a strainer resting over a large bowl (this will remove any inconsistencies). whisk the remaining fresh zest into the curd. transfer to a large jar. refrigerate until cake assembly. (makes ~4 cups)