

Tres Leches Cake

The three-milk cloud - serves 12

Serves 12 • Prep 30 min • Bake 30 min + 4 hr soak • Latin America

INGREDIENTS

The sponge

- 1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp fine sea salt
- 5 large eggs, separated
- 1 cup (200 g) sugar, divided
- 1/3 cup whole milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

The three milks

- 1 can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 can (12 oz) evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup whole milk or heavy cream

The topping

- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream, cold
- 3 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- Ground cinnamon or fresh berries, to finish

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F (175 C). Butter a 9x13-inch baking dish.
2. Whisk the flour, baking powder, and salt. Beat the egg yolks with 3/4 cup of the sugar until pale and doubled, then stir in the milk and vanilla. Fold in the flour mixture.
3. In a clean bowl, beat the egg whites to soft peaks, gradually adding the remaining 1/4 cup sugar until glossy. Gently fold the whites into the batter in thirds - this air is the only leavening that matters.
4. Pour into the dish and bake 25 to 30 minutes, until golden and springy. Cool 15 minutes.
5. Whisk the three milks together. Pierce the cake all over with a fork or skewer, then pour the milk mixture slowly over the whole surface. It will look like too much. It is not.
6. Cover and refrigerate at least 4 hours, ideally overnight - the cake drinks every drop.
7. Whip the cold cream with the sugar and vanilla to soft peaks. Spread over the chilled cake, dust with cinnamon or crown with berries, and serve cold.

Tip • The sponge must be airy and slightly dry - that is what lets it absorb the milks without collapsing. Do not use an oil-based cake, and never skip the overnight chill: tres leches is better on day two.