

# Italian Wedding Cake aka Cream Cake aka Rum Cake

Adapted from [Diana's Desserts](#)



## Italian Pastry Cream Pasticciera Cream:

- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups whole milk
- large pinch of kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon butter

## Chocolate Pasticciera Cream:

- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3 egg yolks
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate
- large pinch of kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon butter

## Rum Syrup:

- 1/4 cup light or dark rum
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar

## Italian Sponge Cake:

- 5 egg yolks
- 5 egg whites
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 1/4 cups cake flour, sifted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon grated fresh lemon rind

## Stabilized Whip Cream:

- 3 cups heavy cream
- 3 tablespoons cold water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons unflavored gelatin
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 5 tablespoons granulated sugar

## For Decoration:

- 1 cup toasted sliced almonds

## **MAKE THE PASTRY CREAMS**

The order of these steps is very important. 1. Whisk together 3 egg yolks with 1/2 cup of the whole milk. 2. Sift 3 tablespoons of flour into the egg mixture and whisk to combine taking care to eliminate any lumps. 3. Add 3 tablespoons of sugar and a large pinch of kosher salt into the mixture and stir to combine. 4. Scald (aka bring just to a boil and then cut the heat) 1 1/2 cups of whole milk in a small saucepan. 5. While whisking continuously, add the scalded milk into the egg mixture. 6. Pour all this back into the pan and bring slowly bring to a low simmer, whisking the whole time. 7. Whisk while simmering for 2 minutes. 8. Remove from the heat and stir in 1 teaspoon of vanilla and 1 tablespoon of unsalted butter. 9. Transfer to a small bowl, cover with plastic wrap that touches the surface of the liquid (to avoid a skin) and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.

The process for the chocolate cream is the same, except that I used 1/4 cup of sugar and added 2 ounces of finely chopped unsweetened chocolate with the vanilla and the unsalted butter at the end.

*NOTE: Both pastry creams are not particularly sweet, but have no fear. Once they are combined with the sweet cake soaked in rum syrup, their flavors balance nicely.*

## **MAKE THE RUM SYRUP**

Mix together the water, sugar, and rum in a small pot. Bring to a boil, and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat and cool before using.

## **MAKE THE ITALIAN SPONGE CAKE**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Butter two 8-inch cake pans then line the bottom of each with parchment. Butter again and then flour the entire interior. Note: Its totally worth it to go through all these steps. Your cake will never stick. Set aside. Place egg yolks and sugar in a mixing bowl and beat until lemon colored. They will be quite thick. Add the vanilla and the lemon rind.

In a separate bowl, beat egg whites until stiff but not dry. Fold into the egg yolk mixture. Sift flour over that and continue to fold, very gently, until just incorporated.

Pour cake batter into prepared pans and bake in preheated oven for 22-24 minutes (NOT the 40 minutes in the original recipe], or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove cakes from oven and turn out of pans onto wire racks to cool completely.

### **MAKE THE STABILIZED WHIPPED CREAM**

Soak plain gelatin in cold water for 5 minutes. Dissolve by placing it in a container over a small pot of simmering water (or in the microwave on low), stir until dissolved. Set aside to cool before using.

In a large well chilled bowl, with well chilled beaters, beat cream with electric mixer. Just before it becomes soft and billowy, slowly add the sugar and vanilla to the whipped cream at the sides of the bowl, continue to whip as you do. Whip the cream until barely stiff.

Add melted and cooled gelatin all at once to cream during whipping. Stop whipping when cream forms soft peaks. Finish beating with whisk to adjust consistency to stiff peaks.

Use or serve immediately or cover and refrigerate until needed. If peaks have softened during refrigeration, re-whip by hand using a whisk.

### **ASSEMBLE THE CAKE**

OK. I messed up while I was assembling this cake. Everything was going OK until I got to the chocolate pastry cream layer and the weight of all that cream and cake make the vanilla pastry cream start to squeeze out of the sides of the cake.

That's when I remembered that I had an 8-inch cake ring and placed it over the finished cake and then put the cake in the freezer 20 minutes to get a hold of itself.

If you have a cake ring or an 8-inch springform pan, I recommend assembling the cake within the ring. Alternatively, you could refrigerate the cake for 30-40 minutes halfway through the assembly process to allow the pastry cream to firm up again.

Ideally, this is how the assembly should go:

Slice sponge cakes in half (horizontally) to form two layers. Using a long, thin bladed knife, cut/split each layer in half lengthwise making four thin layers (each

of my 4 layers was about 1/2-inch thick.

Place bottom sponge layer on platter cut side up, sprinkle/brush with about 1/4 of the rum (be careful not to get the cake too wet, or layers will become soggy).

Spread a layer of vanilla pastry cream on the first sponge layer.

Top the vanilla cream layer with another layer of sponge cake, cut side up.

Sprinkle with another 1/4 of the rum syrup.

Spread a layer of stabilized whipped cream on the second sponge layer.

Top the whipped cream layer with another layer of sponge cake, cut side up, sprinkle with another 1/4 of the syrup. Note: You may want to refrigerate the cake for 30 minutes at this point...or live dangerously and press on.

Spread a layer of chocolate pastry cream on the third sponge layer.

*Note: This is where things started to go wrong for me. Check out how the vanilla cream started to ooze out. Oops! I added a ring around the cake to hold it in place and put it in the freezer for 20 minutes so it could get a hold of itself. Then I continued.*

Sprinkle the remaining rum on the cut side of the last layer of sponge.

Top the chocolate layer with the last layer of sponge cake, right side up (aka cut, rum syrup soaked side down)

Frost the top sponge cake layer and sides of cake with stabilized whipped cream, and if desired, decorate top of cake by piping rosettes using whipped cream and cover sides of cake with sliced almonds, or decorate as desired. Place cake in refrigerator at least 2 hours before serving.

Store any uneaten cake in the refrigerator. The slice that I ate the second day was even more moist than the first day.