
les
FILLES
de
MADELEINE

earl grey almond cake w/ brown butter buttercream, almond praline & roasted grapes

cake adapted from donna hay, buttercream for sarah kieffer's vanilla bean baking book

ingredients

makes a 3 layer 20 cm (8 inch)
or a 2 layer 24 cm (9 inch) cake
for the cake

270 g unsalted butter
2 tsp loose-leaf earl grey tea
6 large eggs
330 g granulated sugar
180 g almond flour
225 g cake flour
1 + 1/2 tsp baking powder

for the praline

110 g caster sugar
1 tbsp water
100 g almonds, very roughly
chopped

for the buttercream

454 g unsalted butter, divided
and room temperature
57 g cream cheese, room tem-
perature
60 ml heavy cream
1/2 tsp salt
452 g powdered sugar

for the roasted grapes

1 bunch of blue grapes (I used
Muscat), ca. 300 grams
1 tbsp honey

how to

for the cake

1. Preheat oven to 160°C. Grease three 20 cm (8 inch) or two 24 cm (9 inch) cake tins with butter or cooking spray and line the bottom of each with parchment paper.
2. In a medium saucepan, melt the butter with the tea. Remove from heat and allow to infuse while you prepare the rest of the cake.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, combine eggs and sugar. Beat on high speed until very thick and pale, ca. 10 minutes.
4. Sift almond flour, cake flour and baking powder over the sugar-egg mixture and use a spatula to fold it in by hand.
5. With a fine mesh sieve set over a medium bowl, strain melted butter and discard the tea. Measure out 225 g of melted butter and add that to the rest of the batter. Gently fold it in until fully combined.
6. Evenly divide the batter over the cake tins and bake for 40-50 minutes, until golden and a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean. Allow to cool on a wire rack for 15-30 minutes, remove cakes from their molds and allow to cool completely.

for the almond praline

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.
2. In a small saucepan, combine sugar and water. Try to moisten all the sugar granules, but don't stir the mixture. Heat the mixture over medium-low heat until it has a deep amber color. Again, don't stir the mixture. If the caramel doesn't brown evenly, just shake the pan a little.
3. When the caramel has a deep amber color, remove from the heat and quickly stir in the roughly chopped nuts. Pour everything onto the prepared baking sheet, spread it out and allow to cool completely.
4. Once cool, break praline into shards. Pulse in the food processor until finely ground. Keep some shards whole for decorating (or snacking) purposes. Store praline in an airtight container until ready to use.

for the brown butter buttercream

1. In a medium, light-colored, heavy-bottomed saucepan, melt 227 g of butter over medium-low heat. Continue to cook, swirling the pan occasionally, until the bubbling and crackling has subsided and little brown

earl grey almond cake w/ brown butter buttercream, almond praline & roasted grapes

(continued)

flecks have started to appear on the bottom of the pan. Swirl the pan more often, now, until the flecks are a deep amber color, but not yet black. (The line between perfectly browned and burned is thin, so keep an eye on it!) Remove pan from the heat and immediately transfer butter and flecks to a heatproof and freezer-safe bowl. Allow to cool for 10 minutes, then transfer to the freezer until solid but not frozen, ca. 30 minutes. (Alternatively, place in the refrigerator for 1-2 hours.)

2. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat solidified brown butter, together with the remaining 227 g of butter, on medium-high until smooth. Add the cream cheese and continue to beat until smooth and creamy. Scrape down the bowl, lower the speed and add heavy cream and salt.

3. With the mixer running on low, slowly add the powdered sugar and beat until combined. Increase the speed to medium-high and beat until light and fluffy, 6 to 8 minutes. Scrape down the bowl as necessary. Use immediately or store in the refrigerator (but be sure to let it come to room temperature before using).

for the roasted grapes

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.

2. Place grapes in a small baking dish and pour over honey. Roast until the grape skins are starting to break, around 10 minutes.

to assemble

1. Make sure the cake layers are even and straight. If cake tops are domed, use a serrated knife to cut off the rounded bumps.

2. Place first cake layer, top side up, on a rotating cake stand, on a cardboard cutout or immediately on your serving platter. Place a small cup's worth of buttercream onto the first layer and use an offset spatula to even it out. Add a sprinkle of the almond praline and top with a second layer of cake. If making a two layer cake, make sure to place the cake top side down. If making a three layer cake, add another layer of buttercream and praline on top and finish with the third cake layer, top side down. Make sure all cake layers are evenly aligned.

3. Use an offset spatula to apply a thin layer of buttercream all along the sides of the cake. Make sure all gaps between the cakes are filled, but allow some of the crumb to peek through. Add another cup's worth of buttercream onto the top of the cake and use the offset spatula to even it out. Keeping your offset spatula in 45° degree angle to the cake, run it all the way around the sides of the cake to remove excess buttercream and smooth out the surface.

4. Refrigerate for about 30 minutes.

5. To finish, top the cake with almond praline and serve with roasted grapes.