



RUSSIAN HONEY CAKE

This recipe requires extensive preparation time. If needed, cake layers and frosting can be made several days in advance. Once assembled, the cake will need to be chilled overnight.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups wildflower honey, divided
- 3 T. water
- 1 cup sugar
- 12 T butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 6 large eggs
- 2 ¼ t. baking soda
- 2 t. fine sea salt

½ t. ground cinnamon

3 ¼ cups all-purpose flour

1 ½ cups dulce de leche or 13.4-ounce can sweetened condensed milk (Dulce de Leche recipe below)

4 ¾ cups heavy cream, chilled and divided

DIRECTIONS

Dulce de Leche

Place unopened can of sweetened condensed milk without the label in a medium saucepan. Fill saucepan with water, covering ¾ of can. Bring water to a gentle simmer and simmer for four hours. Check water level every 30 minutes while cooking and replenish as necessary. Set aside can and allow to cool for at least 30 minutes.

Burned Honey

Pour ¾ cup of honey in a 2-quart saucepan and set over high heat. Bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to medium. Cook honey, stirring occasionally with wooden spoon, until the honey turns a dark amber color, about 3-4 minutes. Turn off heat and carefully add water. Honey will start to bubble profusely. Once bubbling has subsided, whisk to fully combine water and honey. Transfer honey to heat proof bowl and place in prepared water bath to keep honey liquid.

Cake Layers

Preheat oven to 375. On 12-inch piece of parchment paper, trace a circle around the bottom of a 9-inch pie or cake pan. Repeat 9 times. Set aside.

Fill a medium saucepan with 2 inches of water and bring to a gentle simmer. Combine 3 T burned honey, 2/3 cup honey, sugar and butter in a large metal mixing bowl. Place over the saucepan of water, ensuring bowl is not touching the water.

Crack eggs into a small bowl and set aside. In a separate bowl, stir together baking soda, 1 teaspoon salt and cinnamon.

Gently whisk the melted butter, honey mixture to combine. Using a small spoon, scoop a teaspoon of batter and test temperature of the mixture with a finger. When mixture is warm, whisk in eggs. Cook until mixture returns to the same temperature, then whisk in cinnamon mixture to combine. Remove bowl from heat.

Sift flour in three batches over butter and honey mixture, whisking after each addition to incorporate flour. Once batter is smooth, return bowl to saucepan. Set burner on lowest setting possible. Check water level throughout baking process to ensure saucepan has 2 inches of water.

Place piece of parchment tracing-side-down on baking sheet. Spoon a heaping 1/3 cup of batter onto the paper. Spread batter with spatula, rotating paper to create a thin, even, almost transparent layer to edges of the circle. Repeat with remaining layers until you're out of pans.

Bake as many layers at a time as possible, for 5 to 7 minutes, until the cake turns a deep caramel color and springs back at the touch.

When each layer is done, slide paper off the pan to prevent overbaking. If reusing baking sheets while they are still hot, reduce cooking time to 4 to 6 minutes.

After 5-8 minutes, trim baked cake layers to the traced circles. Discard excess cake crumbs. Before cake layers cool entirely, gently loosen from paper with spatula. Place layer back on paper on a flat surface and allow to cool completely.

Place 2 of the least attractive layers in a food processor and pulse into fine crumbs. Cover and set aside.

Frosting

Combine remaining burned honey, dulce de leche and 1 teaspoon salt into a medium bowl and whisk until combined. Whisk $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream into mixture until fully combined. Cover and chill until completely cooled, about 30 minutes.

Pour 4 cups heavy cream into large bowl and beat on medium speed until cream forms soft peaks, about 6-8 minutes. Add honey mixture and whip to medium stiff peaks, about 2-3 minutes.

Cake Assembly

Assemble cake on a 10-inch cardboard circle or flat serving plate. Place a cake layer in the center of the cardboard, then spoon heaping $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of frosting onto the center. Spread frosting evenly, leaving a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch ring unfrosted around the layer's edge. Place next layer atop frosting, center it and continue frosting. After placing the 10th layer, spread $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of frosting over the top. Spread remaining frosting on the sides of the cake. Sprinkle sides with cake crumbs.

Chill cake overnight and serve chilled. For additional impact, garnish with pulled sugar decorations before slicing.

Cake can be made up to two days in advance.