

DOUBLE-VANILLA POUND CAKE, WITH HOMEMADE STRAWBERRY JAM

INGREDIENTS

3/4 cup sugar
1 vanilla bean
1 1/2 sticks (6 ounces) unsalted butter, softened
3 large eggs, at room temperature
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
2 cups cake flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sour cream, at room temperature
1/2 cup strawberry jam (optional)
1/2 cup confectioners sugar (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350F. Grease and flour a 8 x 4 inch loaf pan, a 9 inch round cake pan or a 4 cup bundt pan.

Place the sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer. Use a paring knife to split the vanilla bean lengthwise, then turn the knife over and use the dull edge to scrape the seeds into the sugar. Blend on low speed until the seeds are evenly dispersed. Add the butter and beat on medium-high until the mixture is very light (almost white) in color, 4 to 5 minutes. Scrape down the bowl with the spatula.

Beat the eggs with the vanilla extract in a small bowl. With the mixer running on medium speed, add the eggs to the butter mixture about 2 tablespoons at a time, allowing each addition to completely blend in before adding the next. Scrape the bowl often.

In a medium bowl, whisk together dry ingredient. With the mixer on the lowest speed, add the flour mixture and sour cream alternatively, beginning with one-third of the flour mixture and half the sour cream, repeat, then finish with the flour mixture. Scrape down the bowl and finish blending the batter by hand.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Baked for 45 to 55 minutes, until firm to the touch and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Transfer to a rack to cool completely.

In the picture above, this time I used a mini-bundt pan in the shape of hearts, and then filled the tops with homemade strawberry jam (that I made last summer) and dusted with confectioners sugar. This pound cake tastes great plain, with fresh fruit, ice cream or chocolate.