

ORANGE RED CURRANT TEA CAKES

INGREDIENTS

For the Cakes

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 cups granulated sugar
4 extra-large eggs, at room temperature
1/3 cup grated orange zest (from 6 oranges)
3 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
3/4 cup buttermilk, at room temperature
1 teaspoon orange extract
1/2 cup fresh red currants

For the Orange Syrup

1/2 cup fresh orange juice
1/2 cup sugar

For the Orange Glaze

2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
4 to 6 tablespoons fresh orange juice

Candied orange slices to garnish (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350F. Grease bottom and sides of two 9 x 5-inch loaf pans; dust with flour, tapping out excess. Line the bottoms with parchment paper.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. With the mixer still running, beat in the eggs, one at a time, and the orange zest. In a large bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In another small bowl, combine orange juice, buttermilk, and vanilla. Add the flour and buttermilk mixtures alternately to the batter, beginning and ending with the flour. Gently mix in the red currants. Divide the batter evenly between the pans, smooth the tops, and bake for 40 to 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the loaf comes out clean. Let cool in the pans for 10 minutes.

While the loaf is cooling, make the orange syrup in a small saucepan over medium heat. Stir together the orange juice and sugar until the sugar is completely dissolved. Once dissolved, continue to cook for 3 more minutes. Remove from the heat. Remove loaves to a wire rack on top of a baking sheet. Use a toothpick to poke holes in the tops and sides of the loaves. Brush the tops and sides of the loaves with the orange syrup. Let the syrup soak into the cake and brush again. Let the cakes cool completely. Layer orange slices over the top of the cake.

To make the orange glaze, in a small bowl, whisk together the confectioners' sugar and 4 tablespoons of the orange juice. The mixture should be thick but pourable. Add up to another tablespoon of orange juice if the mixture is too stiff. Pour the orange glaze over the top of each loaf, covering the orange slices, and let it drip down the sides. Let the orange glaze harden, about 15 minutes, before serving.