

Yield: 15-18 **Author:** Variation By MK McClintock (Writer in the Kitchen)

LAVENDER LEMON COCONUT CAKE WITH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

PREP TIME: 45 MIN COOK TIME: 22 MIN TOTAL TIME: 1 H & 7 M

This is what I call a "special occasion" cake, meaning you aren't likely to make it more than once or twice a year. Read the full recipe before starting to make sure you have all ingredients, baking dishes, and kitchen tools you will need. The lavender syrup and lemon filling needs to be prepared at least one hour in advance. We put a yield of 15, but you could have less or more depending on the size of slices. This is a rich cake, and we find thinner slices are quite satisfying.

INGREDIENTS:

For the Cake

- 2 and 1/2 cups unbleached, fine pastry flour; we used Bob's Red Mill brand
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 1 and 2/3 cups granulated sugar
- 5 large egg whites, at room temperature (save 2 of the yolks for the lemon filling)
- 1/2 cup sour cream, at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon coconut extract

- 1 cup coconut milk; we did use refrigerated carton coconut milk (organic), and it worked perfectly
- 1 cup sweetened shredded coconut, fine cut
- 2 teaspoons culinary grade lavender, crushed
- 1 Tablespoon lemon zest, crushed or finely chopped

For the Lavender Syrup

- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp culinary grade lavender
- 1/2 tsp lavender paste (or 1 tsp lavender extract)

For the Lemon Filling

- 3/4 cup lavender syrup (set aside the rest)
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 Tbs unsalted butter, softened and cubed
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp lemon zest

For the Frosting

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 8 ounces cream cheese (1 block), softened to room temperature
- 5 cups confectioner's sugar
- 2 Tablespoons coconut milk; we did use refrigerated carton coconut milk (organic), and it worked perfectly
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

- 1/2 teaspoon coconut extract or flavoring; we used an all-natural flavoring
- 1/8 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened coconut; we used a thicker cut of all natural coconut for the topping, lightly toasted

INSTRUCTIONS:

For the Lemon Filling

1. Whisk together sugar, cornstarch and salt in a small saucepan.
2. Add egg yolks, and whisk until yolks are completely mixed with the dry ingredients.
3. Whisk in 3/4 lavender syrup until mixture is smooth.
4. Cook over medium-low heat until boiling. The mixture will be nice and thick. Once it boils, immediately remove from heat and stir in butter cubes.
5. Gradually whisk in lemon juice until mixture is again smooth. Stir in lemon zest.
6. Pour into a ceramic or glass bowl and cover with plastic wrap or light towel. Refrigerate at least one hour.

For the Lavender Syrup

1. This can be made ahead and refrigerated until needed, up to 2 days.
2. In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, whisk together sugar and 1/2 cup water, and bring to a low boil.
3. Once boiling, add the lavender and reduce to a low simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Add the lemon juice and lavender paste and extract.
5. Remove from heat and allow mixture to cool completely. Once cooled, strain over a bowl and discard the lavender.
6. You will be using 3/4 cup in the lemon filling. Set aside the rest to use when assembling the cake. You won't need much.

For the Cake

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and prepare three 9-inch baking rounds. We used baking spray without parchment.
2. Prepare the lavender syrup (for use in the filling) and lemon filling at least one hour in advance so it has time to refrigerate.
3. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk together the cake flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside while you work on the next step.
4. Have your egg whites beaten and ready to go in a small bowl.
5. Using a handheld or stand mixer (recommended) fitted with a whisk or paddle (recommended) attachment, beat the butter and sugar together on medium-high speed until smooth and creamy, 2-3 minutes. Scrape down sides and bottom as needed.
6. Beat in the egg whites, one at a time, until well combined with the sugar mixture. The mixture will look a little lumpy, but that's okay at this point. Scrape down the sides and move on.
7. Keep the mixer on low speed, and slowly add the flour mixture and coconut milk, alternating each until everything has been added.
8. Add the shredded coconut and either mix on low with the electric mixer or use a spatula (recommended to also scrape).
9. Pour the batter evenly into each of the three cake pans, and smooth out the batter. It's thick, so if you don't, you may end up with a lopsided cake.
10. Optional: We like this step, but feel free to skip. Sprinkle the crushed lavender evenly over each batter-filled pan before baking.
11. Bake 22-25 minutes. Times may be different for you based on varying oven temperatures, so check after 22 minutes. Do not over bake!
12. Make the frosting while the cake is in the oven, but make sure to let the cake cool completely before assembling and frosting. Cool in the

pans on a wire rack for 10-15 minutes, then remove from pans and allow them to finish cooling on the racks.

13. When assembling the cake, brush some of the extra lavender syrup over the first layer. Then, smooth a thin layer of the frosting over the cake layer, followed by half of the lemon filling. Gently smooth it over the frosting until you get an even coating; don't press down!
14. Repeat the process on the second layer with the remainder of the lavender syrup and lemon filling.
15. When frosting the cake, you may have a little of the lemon show through. Top with the coconut and, if desired, a little lavender. The cake does well for only a few days on the counter.
16. The cake freezes well, so unless you're feeding a hungry hoard, you'll have leftovers. A thin slice is satisfying. Simply remove from the freezer and defrost at room temperature.

For the Frosting

1. Unless we're making a large batch, we like to use hand-held mixers for frostings. We find it gives us a smoother and creamy frosting. Stand mixers also work. This is a thick frosting, so using a whisk by hand will give you a good arm workout.
2. In a large bowl using a hand-held mixer, or a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, beat the butter and cream cheese together on medium speed until smooth, about 2-3 minutes. Add the vanilla extract, coconut extract, lavender paste (or extract) and salt, and beat together.
3. Add the confectioners' sugar and coconut milk, alternating each one until everything is combined. Increase to a higher speed and beat for 2-3 more minutes.
4. We don't find the need for extra sugar or coconut milk, but you may add one or the other to adjust consistency, but only add small amounts at a time.
5. Follow instructions on assembling in the "For the Cake" section.

NOTES:

The original base of the coconut cake, before all the modifications, came from Sally's Baking Addiction.

Nutritional info may vary based on the type of ingredients used. If you have specific dietary needs or restrictions, you may need to calculate the nutritional info based on the exact ingredients you use.

Quick Tips

- 1) Measure out all your ingredients to ensure you're ready. Don't forget to read the recipe all the way through. There are multiple steps, and it will save you time and headaches when you prepare and plan ahead.
- 2) Prepare the lavender syrup and lemon filling at least one hour in advance. It will need to refrigerate.
- 3) Some steps are optional, and we note those in the recipe but keep in mind that each step is necessary to achieve the full benefits of this delicious cake.
- 4) ONLY use culinary-grade lavender. Like coconut oil and other herbs and oils, there are multiple uses, and you need to make sure you use the right ingredients.
- 5) Once the cakes have cooled completely, you can carefully slice part of the raised top off to make the cake layers flat. I don't do this because I bake for my home, friends, and family, and see no reason to waste that bit of cake.