

Banana Cakelettes with a Double Identity

Yields: (9) 3" diameter cakes or (1) 9-inch cake

2	large ripe bananas
½ cup	sour cream, room temperature
2	large eggs, room temperature
2 tsp	grated lemon zest
1 ½ tsp	vanilla extract
2 cups	sifted cake flour
¼ cup + 2 Tbsp	sugar
1 tsp	baking soda
¾ tsp	baking powder
½ tsp	salt
8 Tbsp	butter, room temperature
2 Tbsp	canola oil

Simple Syrup

½ cup	granulated sugar
½ cup	water
1 Tbsp	dark rum
1 Tbsp	Crème de Banana (banana liqueur)

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Butter/grease and flour pan(s) and use parchment paper, if desired. I use parchment paper even on the 3" pans. It helps the cakes to come out much more easily.

Cut a slit in the banana peel lengthwise and place on a foil covered baking sheet. Bake for about 10 minutes or until the peels turn black and juices begin to caramelize. Remove from oven, remove peel (& discard) and let the bananas cool to room temperature.

In a food processor, process the cooled roasted bananas and sour cream until smooth. Add the eggs, lemon zest and vanilla and process until just blended.

In the bowl of a mixer with a paddle attachment, combine the dry ingredients on low speed for 30 seconds to blend. Add the butter and ½ of the banana mixture and mix on low speed until the dry ingredients are moistened. Increase to medium speed and beat for 1-2 minutes to aerate and strengthen the cake's structure. Scrape down the sides as necessary.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan(s) and if using 3" diam. pans, place on baking sheet. Bake for 20-22 minutes (3" cakes) and 25-30 minutes (9" cake) or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let the cakes cool in the pan(s) on a rack for about 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, run a knife between the cake and pan sides to release the cakes and let the cakes cool completely.

Making the simple syrup:

Place the sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium heat and bring to a slight boil, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and add the rum and banana liqueur. Brush the warm syrup over the cooled cakes. Fill and frost the cake(s) as desired.

Recipe adapted from The Cake Bible, by Rose Levy Beranbaum

Italian Cream Cheese Frosting

Yield: approx. 3 cups

2 ¼ cups mascarpone cheese, room temperature

1/3 cup superfine sugar

4-6 Tbsp heavy whipping cream

1 tsp clear vanilla extract

1 cup heavy whipping cream

Mix the mascarpone cheese and the sugar together with a paddle attachment until light and fluffy. Add 4-6 Tbsp heavy whipping cream and the vanilla extract until just blended. Scrape into a bowl and set aside.

Clean mixing bowl and switch to the whisk attachment. Beat whipping cream until stiff peaks form and the cream holds its shape on the beater. Gently fold the whipped cream into the mascarpone mixture until it is incorporated.

Place frosting in a pastry bag fitted with desired tip, or simply spread the frosting on the cake with a spatula. This frosting and cake can be stored covered in the refrigerator for about 3 days.

White Chocolate Buttercream

Yield: 2 ¾ cups

2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature

12 ounces good quality white chocolate, melted and cooled slightly

1 cup confectioner's sugar, sifted

1 tsp vanilla extract

In the bowl of a mixer, beat the butter at medium speed until creamy and light in color. Beat in the melted and cooled white chocolate. Decrease the speed to low and slowly add the confectioner's sugar and vanilla, scraping the sides and bottom of the bowl as necessary. Mix until light and fluffy. This frosting and cake can be stored covered at room temperature for about 3 days.

Recipe from Food & Wine