

Vietnamese Vanilla Sponge Cake (Banh Bong Lan)

Makes one 10-inch cake

INGREDIENTS

- 5 large eggs (separate yolks and whites and bring to room temperature)
- 1/2 cup granulated white sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla paste
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1/4 cup oil
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- Powder sugar (optional; for dusting)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a medium-size bowl, whisk together egg yolks, sugar and vanilla. Add oil and milk and whisk until combined.
3. Sift together flour, baking powder and salt. Add flour mixture to the egg mixture. Mix until all batter is evenly incorporated. Set aside.
4. Make the meringue: Use either a hand mixer or stand mixer with a whisk attachment to whip the egg whites and cream of tartar. Start on the medium low setting then gradually increase speed until egg whites become frothy. Continue whisking until you get stiff peaks.
5. Add meringue a third at a time to the batter. Incorporate the meringue slowly with a folding motion. Avoid overmixing as that will deflate the meringue.
6. Coat a 10-inch cake pan with a non-stick baking spray and cover bottom and sides with parchment paper. Add batter to the pan and even out the top. Give the pan a gentle drop to release any air bubbles. Place the pan into a larger pan that will function as a water bath. Fill the water bath pan 1-inch with water and bake for 25-30 minutes.
7. Check for doneness by inserting a long skewer into the center of the cake. When it comes out clean, cake is done. Turn off the oven and open the oven door to allow the cake to cool down gradually. Otherwise, cake will deflate rapidly.
8. Once cooled, gently tilt the cake pan to its side to release the cake. Peel off the parchment paper around the cake and the bottom. Transfer cake to a serving platter and lightly dust with powdered sugar (optional).