

Serves: 12

Lady Baltimore Cake

Ingredients

1 cup sherry	1 tsp. almond extract	For the hard icing:
2 cups cake flour	3 egg whites, at room tem-	2 cups sugar
1/4 tsp. salt	perature	1/2 cup water
2 tsp. baking powder	For the soft icing:	2 egg whites, beaten until frothy
8 Tbs. unsalted butter, at	1 cup sugar	1/2 tsp. cream of tartar
room temperature	1/2 cup water	Juice of 1 lemon
1 1/4 cups sugar	1 tsp. vanilla extract	1 tsp. almond extract
3/4 cup milk	1 tsp. almond extract	1 cup chopped black walnuts

Directions

1. Soak the raisins in the sherry for several hours.
2. Preheat the oven to 375°F and flour two eight-inch cake pans. Set aside. Sift together the flour, salt, and baking powder several times. Set aside.
3. Cream the butter and sugar in a large bowl. Alternately add the flour and milk in three parts, beating well after each addition. Stir in the almond extract.
4. In a large bowl, beat the egg whites until they are stiff but not dry. Fold a quarter of them into the batter, then fold the batter into the remaining egg whites. Divide the batter between the two prepared cake pans and bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean.
5. While the cake is baking, prepare the soft icing. Blend the sugar and water in a small saucepan. Heat just long enough to dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat and add the vanilla and almond extracts. When the cake layers have cooled for five minutes in the pan on a rack, remove them from the pans and, while still hot, spoon the icing over them.
6. To make the hard icing, boil the sugar and water in a medium saucepan until a very thin, long thread drops from a spoon. If you're using a candy thermometer, it should register between 238 and 240°F. Pour the boiling liquid in a thin stream over the egg whites, beating continuously with an electric mixer. Add the cream of tartar, lemon juice, and almond extract. Continue beating for about four minutes, until soft peaks form.
7. Spread the hard icing over the top of each of the cooled layers. Drain the raisins and sprinkle them over the top of each layer, then sprinkle the walnuts over the top of each layer. Carefully transfer one layer to a cake plate and then place the second layer on top of it. Spread icing on the sides of the cake. Allow the icing to harden before serving.

