

# PERSIAN LOVE CAKE

If you haven't caught the latest recipe over on my series 'Around The World in 80 Cakes', number 61 on the list of the 80 best rated cakes in world is a Persian Love Cake. It has an incredibly soft, gorgeously moist, fragrant and tender spiced crumb (can we please give it up for cardamom aka the queen of spice?), drenched in a zingy and zesty rose water syrup, topped with water icing and finished with a scattering of pistachios and dried edible flowers.

Recipe Makes: 1 x 22 cm Tin or 1 Large Bundt Tin

W H A T	Y O U D	N E E D	SPONGE	SOAK	TO DECORATE
			200g Unsalted Butter*	50 g Caster Sugar	Unsalted Pistachio*
			50 ml Veg/Neutral Oil	40 ml Water	Dried Edible Flowers
			170 g Caster Sugar	30 ml Lemon Juice, fresh	
			4 Medium Eggs	Zest of 1/2 Lemon	*roughly chopped
			12 Cardamom Pods	2 Cardamom Pods	
			150 g '00' Flour, sifted	1/2 tbsp Rose Water	
			300 g Ground Almonds		
			1 ¼ tsp Baking Powder	<b>ICING</b>	
			Pinch of Salt	225 g Icing Sugar	
			Zest & Juice of 1 Lemon	Juice of 1 Lemon	
			1 tbsp Rose Water	1/2 tbsp Water	
			100 ml Buttermilk*		

\* room temp

- METHOD**
- Preheat your oven to 150°C/302°F and liberally grease and flour a 22 cm bundt tin making sure you hit all those nooks and crannies for a smooth and stress free cake release at the end.
  - Add the butter and sugar to a stand mixer bowl and cream together until light and fluffy using the paddle attachment, for at least for 5 minutes on a medium speed.
  - Once you've worked some air into the mix, pour in the oil and mix until smooth.
  - Next in are the eggs. I would normally say to beat well between each addition but I plonked them all in together and still yielded a great result. Just leave it to mix on a medium to high speed for about 5 minutes.
  - In a separate bowl mix together the flour, ground almonds, salt and baking powder.
  - Next you want to split open the cardamom pods, remove the seeds and use a pestle and mortar to grind down to a fine dust.

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- Add the mixed flour, ground cardamom seeds, lemon zest and juice and rose water to the main bowl and give it a good mix until there are no visible streaks of flour. You can do this by hand using a rubber spatula or pop it back into the stand mixer and mix on a low to med speed.

- When combined, pour in the buttermilk to finish and fold in well before to completely combine before transferring the batter to the floured tin.

- Pop it into the oven and bake for 50 to 52 minutes.

- In the meantime, make the drizzle by adding all ingredients to a saucepan (don't worry about removing the seeds from the pod, just pierce each one with a knife and pop it in) and place over a gentle heat until slightly thickened, with a more syrupy consistency. This should take about 8 to 10 mins over a low to med heat. When done, leave to one side.

- Once your cake is baked, allow it to sit for 5 minutes at room temp to relax slightly. You should see the sponge edges start to come away from the tin – a good sign that the sponge will come out in one piece!

- Place a cooling rack upside down on top of the tin. Turn upside down and pray for a gently thud of sponge on the rack.

- Once it's out in one piece, use a skewer to poke holes in the top, place a baking tray underneath your cooling rack and pour over the drizzle whilst it is still warm. Any caught syrup in your baking tray? Just re-pour that goodness back over it or use a pastry brush to brush over.

- Carefully cover the cake with clingfilm (go for a loose tight as opposed to snug) and leave to completely cool.

- Once the cake is cool to touch, mix together ingredients for icing. It may seem like too little liquid to sugar but you want a thick water icing glaze as opposed to a...well, watery one?

- Transfer the cake to your serving plate before pouring the icing on top and finishing with a scattering of pistachio and edible petals.

- Allow the icing to set before using a hot knife to slice and serve.