

# Vanilla Lavender Lemon Cake

For her 18th birthday, Alexandra wanted lavender and lemon as her birthday cake flavors, and here is the recipe we used to great applause. The cake is outstanding, the best vanilla cake any of us have ever tasted. The lavender is not too much; it doesn't taste like soap.

The cake recipe came from [sugargeekshow.com](http://sugargeekshow.com). The lavender milk & syrup came from [sallysbakingaddiction.com](http://sallysbakingaddiction.com). The lemon frosting is my recipe.

The cake recipe requires having a kitchen scale as most portions are weighed portions, not measured. **You need a kitchen scale before you embark upon this cake recipe.**

Also note that the cake recipe calls for bleached cake flour. Very specific.

## Make the lavender milk

whole milk	1 cup
dried culinary lavender	2 tsp

- In a small saucepan over low heat, bring the milk to a simmer. Remove from heat and immediately add the lavender. Set aside to steep for 20 minutes. Strain the milk through a fine-mesh sieve set over a bowl, then discard the lavender. Cool the milk completely before using in cake batter, but do not refrigerate.

## Make the lavender syrup

water	½ cup	room temperature
granulated sugar	½ cup	
dried culinary lavender	2 tsp	

- In a small saucepan over medium-high heat, bring the sugar and water to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low and add the lavender. Simmer the syrup for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let steep until completely cool. Strain the syrup through a fine-mesh sieve set over a bowl, then discard the lavender.

# Vanilla Lavender Lemon Cake

## Make the cake

- Prepare two 9"x3" cake pans or three 6"x2" cake pans with butter & flour or parchment paper. I use a round of parchment paper on the bottom.
- Preheat the oven to 335° F/168° C. The lower temperature will keep the cake from forming a dome on top.

lavender milk	2 oz.	room temperature
whole milk	2 oz.	room temperature
canola oil	3 oz.	

- In a small bowl, whisk the above three ingredients together and set aside. This is the oil-milk mixture.

lavender milk	4 oz.	room temperature
whole milk	2 oz.	room temperature
vanilla extract	1 TBLSP	
eggs	3 large	

- In a medium bowl, whisk together the above four ingredients and set aside. This is the egg-milk mixture.

bleached cake flour	13 oz.	I use "Swans Down" brand
granulated sugar	13 oz.	
baking powder	3 tsp	
baking soda	¼ tsp	
salt	½ tsp	
unsalted butter	8 oz.	softened to room temperature

- Into a large bowl, sift the flour, then stir in the sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Using a hand-held pastry cutter, slowly add chunks of your softened butter until it is all added. Continue cutting together until it looks like coarse sand. If your kitchen is warm, you need to do this quickly before the butter becomes too soft.
- Add the oil-milk mixture all at once to the dry ingredients, and beat on medium-high using a hand mixer for 2 full minutes to develop the structure. Set a timer! Don't worry, this will not over-mix the cake. It needs the full 2 minutes.
- After 2 minutes, scrape the bowl. This is an important step. If you skip it, you will have hard lumps of flour and unmixed ingredients in your batter. If you do it later, they will not mix in fully.

## Vanilla Lavender Lemon Cake

- Then, slowly add in the egg-milk mixture while mixing on low, stopping to scrape the bowl one more time halfway through. Mix until just combined. Your batter should be thick, almost like whipped cream.
- Divide the batter into your prepared cake pans and fill 3/4 of the way full. Weigh the pans to make sure they're even.
- Bake for 35 minutes, and check your cakes. Do the "done test". Insert a toothpick to see if it comes out clean, both in the middle and toward the side. Gently touch the top of the cake - does it spring back? Oven temperatures vary, so if it's not done yet, bake for a few more minutes (2-3) and check again until it passes the "done" test.
- Remove the cakes from the oven and drop them on the countertop to release air and prevent too much shrinking. Let them cool on top of a cooling rack until they are barely warm.
- Then, place the cooling rack on top of the cake, flip the pan and the cooling rack over so the pan is now upside down on the cooling rack. Remove the pan carefully. Repeat with the other pan(s). Let cool completely.

### Make the frosting & Frost the cake

cream cheese	1 8-oz package	softened
butter	4 oz (1 stick)	softened, not melted
lemon zest	2 tsps	grated
lemon juice	2 TBLSP	
powdered sugar	2 cups	sifted

- Whip the cream cheese and butter together on medium high speed until combined and airy, about 2 minutes.
- Beat in the lemon zest & juice.
- Very slowly, add small amounts at a time of the sifted powdered sugar and mix on low speed. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula and continue mixing.
- Place one cake layer onto a cake platter. Using a paint brush or pastry brush, generously brush lavender syrup on top of the cake. Let it sink in for a couple minutes.
- Then spread frosting over the top of the cake. It's okay if some of it falls over the sides.
- Place the second cake layer on top of the first, and generously brush lavender syrup over the top of that cake. After it sinks in for a couple minutes, then spread frosting over the top of that cake. Do the same with the third cake layer, if you baked three.
- At the end, swirl the icing knife around in concentric circles to make a pattern. Again, it's okay if some of the frosting spills over the cake sides.