

Easy French Butter Cake

Easy French butter cake is a beloved recipe that transforms simple ingredients into an elegant dessert. With its golden crust, tender crumb, and rich buttery flavor, this cake is equally suited for casual snacking or special occasions. Its appeal lies in the ease of preparation and the balanced use of everyday ingredients. Whether you dust it with powdered sugar, enjoy it with coffee, or dress it up with fruit and cream, this cake highlights how French baking traditions combine sophistication with simplicity.

In this complete guide, you'll explore the background, ingredients, step-by-step process, serving tips, and variations that make this recipe a timeless favorite.

The Beauty of French Butter Cake

A Taste of French Tradition

French butter cake stands out for its ability to impress without elaborate decoration. Unlike frosted layer cakes, it focuses on flavor and texture. Families in France have enjoyed versions of this cake for generations, often pairing it with morning coffee or afternoon tea. Its light sweetness and tender crumb reflect the French approach to baking: let the ingredients speak for themselves.

Why It Works So Well

The secret to this cake is the balance of butter, sugar, eggs, and flour. Butter provides richness, sugar balances sweetness, and eggs build structure. Baking powder ensures the right lift, while milk softens the crumb. Much like the delicate harmony of a [moist flavorful citrus olive oil cake](#), this butter cake demonstrates how restraint and proportion create the most memorable desserts.

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- Author: [Aaron recipes](#)
- Total Time: [1 hour 5 minutes](#)
- Yield: [1 cake \(9-inch round\) 1x](#)
- Diet: [Vegetarian](#)

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Description

A simple yet elegant French butter cake with a golden crust and tender crumb. Perfect with coffee, tea, or dressed with fruit and cream.

Ingredients

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Scale 1x 2x 3x

- ☐ 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
 - ☐ 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
 - ☐ 4 large eggs, room temperature
 - ☐ 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
 - ☐ 2 cups all-purpose flour
 - ☐ 1 teaspoon baking powder
 - ☐ 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - ☐ 1/2 cup whole milk or heavy cream
 - ☐ Cook Mode Prevent your screen from going dark
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Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and line a 9-inch round cake pan.
2. Cream butter and sugar together for 3–5 minutes until light and fluffy.
3. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition.
4. Stir in vanilla extract.
5. Whisk flour, baking powder, and salt in a separate bowl.
6. Gradually add dry mixture to wet ingredients, mixing until just combined.
7. Pour in milk or cream and stir gently until smooth.
8. Transfer batter to pan, smooth top, and bake 40–50 minutes until golden and a toothpick comes out clean.

9. Cool in pan 10–15 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

10. Dust with powdered sugar or serve plain.

Notes

Bring all ingredients to room temperature for best results.

Do not overmix after adding flour.

Cake keeps for 3 days at room temperature or up to a week refrigerated.

Freeze wrapped slices for up to 2 months.

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
- Cook Time: 45 minutes
- Category: Dessert
- Method: Baking
- Cuisine: French

Nutrition

- **Serving Size:** 1 slice
- **Calories:** 290
- **Sugar:** 22g
- **Sodium:** 140mg
- **Fat:** 16g
- **Saturated Fat:** 10g
- **Unsaturated Fat:** 5g
- **Trans Fat:** 0g
- **Carbohydrates:** 32g
- **Fiber:** 1g
- **Protein:** 4g
- **Cholesterol:** 85mg

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Ingredients for the Perfect Cake

Essential Ingredients

To make this cake, you'll need:

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup whole milk or heavy cream

These staples create a batter that is both rich and delicate. The softened butter creams easily with sugar, while eggs provide structure. Flour and baking powder create lightness, and milk ensures tenderness.

The Role of Preparation

Success starts with preparation. Bring butter, eggs, and milk to room temperature so they combine smoothly. Sift the flour with baking powder and salt to remove lumps and ensure even distribution. These small steps make the difference between a dense cake and a perfectly tender crumb.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Preparing the Pan and Oven

Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease a 9-inch round cake pan and line the bottom with parchment paper. This prevents sticking and guarantees a clean release. A properly prepared pan ensures the finished cake holds its shape.

Mixing and Baking the Batter

Cream the butter and sugar together in a large bowl with a mixer for 3–5 minutes, until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in the vanilla extract. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture, mixing on low until just incorporated. Pour in the milk and stir gently until smooth. Avoid overmixing, which can toughen the crumb. Transfer the batter into the prepared pan, smoothing the top with a spatula. Bake for 40–50 minutes, until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool for 10–15 minutes in the pan, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Baking and Cooling Tips

Avoiding Overbaking

To keep the cake moist, avoid overbaking. Start checking at the 40-minute mark. A toothpick should come out clean with only a few moist crumbs. The top should be golden, and the edges should slightly pull away from the pan. Overbaking will dry out the crumb and reduce tenderness.

Cooling the Cake Properly

Allow the cake to cool for 10–15 minutes in the pan before transferring it to a wire rack. Cooling too quickly can cause breakage, while leaving it too long can trap steam. Once cooled, dust with powdered sugar or serve plain. Serving at room temperature highlights the buttery aroma.

Serving Suggestions

Everyday Enjoyment

This cake is delightful in its simplest form. Slice and serve plain for breakfast or an afternoon snack. A light dusting of powdered sugar elevates its appearance without overpowering its natural flavor. Pair with coffee, tea, or milk for a comforting treat.

Dressing It Up

For celebrations, add accompaniments. Whipped cream and fresh berries provide freshness and color. A drizzle of fruit sauce or lemon curd pairs well with the buttery base. For shine and extra sweetness, brush the top with warmed apricot jam. These additions make the cake suitable for dinner parties, birthdays, or holidays.

Tips and Variations

Flavor Enhancements

Experiment with flavor variations to make the cake your own. Add almond extract for nuttiness or fold in citrus zest for brightness. Chocolate chips, dried fruits, or spices like cinnamon can add depth and warmth. A swirl of flavored jam baked into the batter gives visual appeal and a surprise in every slice.

Dietary Adjustments

The recipe adapts easily for different diets. Substitute gluten-free flour for a wheat-free version. For dairy-free baking, use margarine and plant-based milk. Reduce sugar slightly or replace with a baking-friendly substitute to make it lighter. Each adjustment keeps the essence of the cake intact.

Storing and Freezing

Storing at Room Temperature or Fridge

Store the cake at room temperature in an airtight container for up to three days. For longer freshness, refrigerate for up to a week. Always bring refrigerated cake to room temperature before serving to restore its soft crumb.

Freezing for Longer Storage

Freeze the cake by wrapping tightly in plastic wrap, then foil, and placing it in a freezer-safe bag. It will keep for up to two months. To serve, thaw overnight in the refrigerator and bring to room temperature. Freezing individual slices makes it easy to enjoy a portion whenever you want.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I use salted butter instead of unsalted?

Yes, but reduce the salt by half. Unsalted butter allows better control over flavor balance.

Can I bake this in a different pan?

Yes, a loaf or bundt pan works. Adjust baking time since thicker cakes may take longer.

Why did my cake sink in the middle?

This happens if the batter is overmixed or the oven door is opened too early. Mix gently and avoid peeking until it's nearly done.

Can I substitute cream for milk?

Yes. Cream creates a richer crumb, while milk offers lightness. Both work, depending on your preference.

How do I know the cake is done?

The top should be golden, edges pulling slightly from the pan, and a toothpick should come out clean.

Can I frost this cake?

Yes, though it's traditionally served plain. A thin glaze or whipped cream works without masking flavor.

Does it taste better the next day?

Yes, resting overnight deepens flavor. Cover and serve at room temperature for the best experience.

What can I serve with it?

Fresh fruit, whipped cream, ice cream, or a drizzle of caramel make excellent accompaniments.

Conclusion

The easy French butter cake is proof that less is often more in baking. With just a few pantry staples, you can create a cake that feels elegant yet comforting. Its delicate crumb and buttery flavor make it versatile enough to enjoy plain or with simple toppings. Like the balanced flavors in a [moist flavorful citrus olive oil cake](#), this recipe highlights how careful proportions and classic techniques create unforgettable results. Once you bake it, you'll see why this cake has been cherished for generations.