

If you're going to have one cake recipe, I would suggest that it be this one. It's great in trifle, as a decorated slab cake, cupcakes, and layered. I've even used it for a jellyroll. It's got just the right amount of crumb and moistness. Found in my mom's original Joy of Cooking, it was the first cake I ever baked, and even now, when I have baked many, many cakes, this recipe gets used the most often. It makes a lovely unassuming cake for a tiered wedding cake, but is lovely simply split in two, spread with raspberry preserves and dusted with icing sugar.

Hot Milk Cake

2 x 8" round layers, 1 - 9" x 13" slab, or a dozen cupcakes.

Ingredients:

1½ c flour
1½ t baking powder
½ t salt
¾ c milk
1½ T butter
3 eggs
1½ c sugar
Zest of a lemon

Directions:

In a medium sized bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder and salt. Combine the milk and butter, and heat until the butter has melted but the milk does not boil. You can use a microwave for this. Using a stand mixer (or a very strong wrist) beat the eggs until very light, perhaps as long as 4 minutes. Add the sugar very slowly, beating constantly. Continue beating for 3 full minutes. This step is critical to a great cake. Fold the dry ingredients into the egg & sugar mixture. Next, fold in the milk and butter. The milk should be hot, don't let it cool too much. Finally, fold in the zest. Bake in prepared pan(s) or in paper-lined muffin tins. Bake 8" pans for 30 minutes, 9" x 13" for 35 minutes at 350°, and cupcakes will take less time, test at 25 minutes. Let rest in the pans for 10 minutes, before removing to a rack to cool.