BEST EVER
old-fashioned
CAKES

The best classic, vintage, and potluck cakes you'll ever make!

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About Janel

Hey there! I'm Janel (aka NellieBellie–a childhood nickname.) I'm a middle-aged mom of 2 teens with a back pocket full of great recipes, creative ideas, resources, and crazy life experiences. I'm using them all to tell anyone who will pay attention about the power sitting at the table with a home-cooked meal has to create memories, relationships, and solve world peace.

I'm totally serious right now. This world needs a good piece of chocolate cake.

I totally try to get myself dressed and to my office each day like a proper #girlboss. But a couple of times a week I'll be curled up on the couch with my laptop, Say Yes to the Dress on, and a cup of coffee (one of many!) sitting on the coffee table. Yes, the same coffee table that I tell my family not to use because it's on the beautiful white rug. So hypocritical!

The oldest of ten kids, I'm incredibly bossy. But am usually always right (no really, it's true! I know when to pick a fight and that, my friend, is the key to seeming super smart). The rule in my home is that the oldest never has to give up their seat. Which means, I always have a comfy spot to sit while my kids (younger than my siblings. Well, my oldest is older than my youngest sibling.) often are on the floor

@MIZNELLIEBELLIE

Contents

Classic Cakes

These cake recipes are as classic as it gets. You'll never make a boxed cake mix again!.

THE BEST CHOCOLATE CAKE

The most popular recipe on NellieBellie, this chocolate cake is well-loved and used. For good reason! Easy to make and consistently delicious. You'll love it!

SERVINGS: 12 **PREP TIME:** 15 MINUTES **BAKE TIME:** 22 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

CAKE
3/4 cup butter softened
3 eggs at room temperature
2 c. all-purpose flour
3/4 cup cocoa
1 tsp baking soda
3/4 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
2 cup sugar
2 tsp vanilla
1 1/2 cup milk

FROSTING
2 sticks softened butter
1/2 cup cocoa
1.5 cup powdered sugar
bit of milk, if needed

i've been making this cake for decades and it is my absolute go-to cake recipe!

DIRECTIONS FOR CAKE:

01. Grease bottom and sides of pan (I use 2 round pans or 1 9 by 13). preheat oven to 350 degrees. I would even suggest lining the bottom with parchment paper and then spraying.

02. Beat butter for 30 seconds or so.,slowly add in the sugar while continuing to beat.

03. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each one. Beat in vanilla.

04. Add dry ingredients beating after each addition.

05. Add 1/2 of the milk, beat. Then add the other 1/2. Beat just until everything is combined nicely.

06. Spread batter about into pans making them about 2/3 full. You may have remaining batter (I sometimes make a few cupcakes.). Bake for 30-35 minutes.

DIRECTIONS FOR FROSTING:

01. Beat all ingredients together until smooth.

Note: add milk to create the frosting consistency you prefer.

READER TIPS:

One of our readers has let us know that, when making cupcakes with this recipe, 375 degrees for 17 minutes is perfect. (Thanks, Dina!)There has been a common problem with the cake falling in the center and being under cooked. This is because it is removed too soon. Be sure that the cake is dry on the edges, and that that a knife comes out clean when inserted into the center. If you remove it too soon, even if it looks done, it will fall (all cakes will!)..

NEVER FAIL WHITE CAKE RECIPE

This has been the go-to white cake recipe for myself and so many of NellieBellie readers. Easy to make and perfect for so many occasions. Top it with your favorite frosting!

SERVINGS: 12 **PREP TIME:** 15 MINUTES **BAKE TIME:** 25 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

4 egg whites at room temp.
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup shortening
1 3/4 cups sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 1/3 cups buttermilk

Use clear vanilla to keep your cake super white!

DIRECTIONS

01. Grease & flour pans (1 - 9 by 13 or 2 - 9 inch round).
02. Mix flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in medium bowl and set aside.
03. Beat shortening with an electric mixer for about 30 seconds on medium speed in large bowl.
04. Add sugar and vanilla. Beat until combined.
05. Add egg whites and beat for about 30 seconds.
06. Add flour mixture and buttermilk. Beat until combined. Beat on high for an additional 30 seconds.
07. Spread batter into the pan (s). Bake in 350 degree oven for 20 to 25 minutes (30-35 for 9 by 13 pan).

CLASSIC CARROT CAKE RECIPE

Just like Grandma used to make, this is a classic carrot cake without nuts. But, go ahead and add some if that's the way your carrot cake needs to be!

SERVINGS: 12 **PREP TIME:** 20 MINUTES **BAKE TIME:** 30 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

4 eggs at room temp.
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 3/4 cups sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
3 cups carrots, grated
3/4 cup oil

DIRECTIONS

01. Grease & flour two 9 inch round pans or one 9x13 pan.

02. In large mixing bowl ,stir together wet ingredients. Stir well.

03. Add dry ingredients, stir just until combined.

04. Add in carrots and stir just until combined.

05. Pour batter into pans, dividing evenly. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.

STRAWBERRY CAKE

A delightful cake full of delicious strawberry flavor!

SERVINGS: 12
PREP TIME: 20 MINUTES
BAKE TIME: 45 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

1 3/4 cups white sugar
3 ounce strawberry flavored gelatin
1 cup butter softened
4 eggs room temperature
2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup milk room temperature
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 cup strawberries
1/2 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

01. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 2 8-inch cake rounds.

02. Puree your strawberries, transfer to a small saucepan and boil gently until reduced by half (about 20 minutes). Cool completely.

03. Add butter, sugar, vanilla, and jello to a large mixing bowl. Beat until smooth.

04. Add eggs one at time beating between each egg.

05. In a separate bowl mix flour and baking powder.

06. Add milk and flour alternately to the butter mixture. Beat well after each addition.

07. Pour into prepared cake pans.
Bake for 35-40 minutes or until toothpick in the center comes out clean.

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Perfect for carrot cake!

INGREDIENTS

2 packages of soft cream cheese
1/2 cup soft butter
1.5 cups powdered sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla

DIRECTIONS

01. Beat the cream cheese & butter well.
02. Add powdered sugar and beat again.
03. Add vanilla and beat until fluffy.

STRAWBERRY FROSTING

Ultimate on strawberry cake!

INGREDIENTS

1 cup unsalted butter, room temp
3 to 4 cups of confectioners sugar
pinch of salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon milk or heavy cream
1 cup medium strawberries

DIRECTIONS

01. Puree your strawberries, transfer to a small saucepan and boil gently until reduced by half (about 20 minutes). Cool completely. You want to end up with about 1/2 cup pureed strawberries
02. Beat butter and sugar together well (at least a couple of minutes).
03. Add salt, extract, and cream and beat again until light and fluffy.
04. Stir in the cooled strawberry puree.

Vintage Cakes

*You have fond memories of your grandmother making these,
now you can make them for your family!*

CHOCOLATE CHIP MARBLE BUNDT CAKE

A bundt cake is old-school. But this cake tastes anything but old-school and that marbling is a work of art!

SERVINGS: 12 **PREP TIME:** 20 MINUTES **BAKE TIME:** 55 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

1 cup butter softened, unsalted
3 cups all-purpose Flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 cups sugar
4 eggs at room temp
2 teaspoons vanilla
1/2 cup milk
1 cup sour cream, room temp
2 tablespoons cocoa (for chocolate batter)
1/2 cup mini chocolate chips

This chocolate chip marble bundt cake is best plain, with a cup of coffee. You could drizzle some melted chocolate, or a simple white icing. But why?

DIRECTIONS

01. In small bowl mix flour, baking powder, and salt together. Set aside.

02. In mixing bowl cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy.

03. Beat in eggs, on at a time

04. Add vanilla and sour cream, gently beat just until combined.

05. Beat in a small amount of the flour mixture followed by a small amount of milk. Repeat until all the flour and milk is added, beat just until mixed.

06. Divide the batter in half. Add 2 tablespoons of cocoa to one half of the batter. Stir until incorporated.

07. Add 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips to the other half of the batter (plain). Stir until incorporated.

08. In a greased bundt pan drop batter by the spoonful, alternating chocolate and vanilla flavors. Use only 1/2 the batter for the first layer. (this batter is thick, don't worry about that...it will work out in the oven!) Repeat.

09. Drag a butter knife through the cake going across the width of the cake, and then the length. Do not be tempted to "over swirl" or you'll get a muddy looking cake. Wipe the knife off when you get to the end.

10. BAKE the cake in a 350 degree oven for about 50-60 minutes (check at 50 minutes) or until a knife inserted comes out clean.

LEMON LAVENDER QUICK BREAD

Lavender and lemon pair together to make an absolutely delightful quick bread.

SERVINGS: 8 **PREP TIME:** 20 MINUTES **BAKE TIME:** 50 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

2 cups all purpose flour
1 cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 egg beaten lightly
1 cup milk
1/4 cup olive oil
juice and finely grated peel of
2 lemons
2 teaspoons dried
lavender or 2 tablespoons
fresh lavender, finely
chopped
for glaze:
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon butter

The house smells divine when making this!

DIRECTIONS

01. Preheat oven to 350degrees. Grease a loaf pan, set aside.

02. In a large bowl mix together the flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt.

03. In another bowl combine the egg, milk, oil, lemon peel, lemon juice, and lavender.

04. Dump the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and stir just until the batter is moistened. (The batter will be lumpy).

05. Spoon batter into the greased loaf pan. Bake for 50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes clean and top of loaf is cracked.

06. Melt butter with sugar and lemon juice in small saucepan until well combined.

07. Poke holes in the top of the lemon loaves and slowly pour the glaze over the top.

Note: You can put these in a freezer bag and freeze for up to 3 months or store in the fridge for 1 week. For mini loaves reduce the baking time to 40 minutes.

LEMON BLUEBERRY CAKE

I have heard "this is my favorite cake EVER" from many readers about this cake. I couldn't agree more! My personal favorite. An easy and delicious lemon blueberry bundt cake. This cake is buttery and delicious, very close to a lemon blueberry pound cake.

SERVINGS: 12
PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
BAKE TIME: 75 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

2 3/4 cups flour
1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup butter
2 cup sugar
4 large eggs
3 tablespoons lemon juice about 2 large lemons
2 tablespoons lemon zest about 2 large lemons
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup sour cream
3 cup blueberries mix with 2 tablespoons flour

keeps the blueberries from sinking in the cake!

DIRECTIONS

01. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a bundt pan.
02. Mix together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Set aside.
03. Beat the butter and sugar on medium-high for about 3 minutes.
04. Add your eggs 1 at a time, beating after each addition.
05. Continue beating adding a bit of the flour mixture to the egg mixture in intervals, a bit at a time.
06. Add the lemon juice, zest, vanilla, and sour cream. Gently stir these into the batter with a spatula or wooden spoon.
07. Gently fold in the blueberries.
08. Spread the batter into the prepared bundt pan. Bake for 60 minutes, check for doneness. If a knife in the center doesn't come back clean, put the cake back in for another 10-15 minutes. (note: if the top is brown but the center isn't cooked, cover the top with aluminum foil to keep from burning)

ICING:

1 1/2 tablespoons butter, melted
2 cups powdered sugar
1/3 cups lemon juice
pinch salt
1 tablespoon lemon zest

Beat the powdered sugar, lemon juice, salt, and zest together.
Slowly beat in the melted butter into the sugar and lemon combo. Beat until combined well.
Let cool a bit until the desired consistency for pouring.
Pour over your cake, let cool.

OLD-FASHIONED GINGERBREAD CAKE

SERVINGS: 8 **PREP TIME:** 20 MINUTES **BAKE TIME:** 30 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
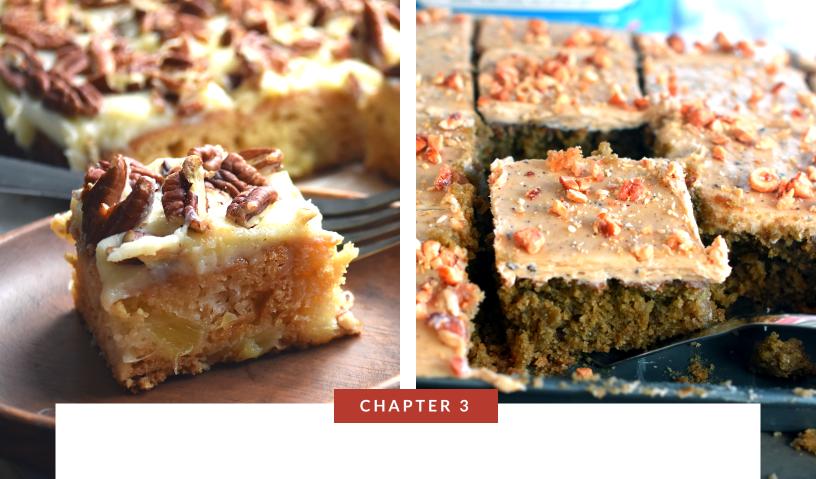1/2 cup shortening
1/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup molasses
1/2 cup water

DIRECTIONS

01. Grease a 9 inch round or square pan (go ahead and use a smaller one if needed, just increase your time by about 10 minutes).

02. Mix flour, cinnamon, ginger, baking powder, & baking soda together. Set aside.

03. Beat shortening until fluffy (about 45 seconds).

04. Add egg & molasses and beat for 1 minute.

05. Add 1/2 of the flour mixture and beat until combined.

06. Add 1/2 cup water and beat until combined.

07. Add remaining flour mixture and beat just until combined.

08. Pour into pan and bake in 350 degree oven for 30-40 minutes (use the toothpick method to check!)

This is a forgotten cake recipe that is rarely ever made in modern homes. But gosh, serve this up with a dollop of real whipped cream and you'll be transported to simpler times!

Potluck Cakes

These cakes feed a crowd, are easy to make, and are real crowd pleasers. Always on the potluck table!

ONE-BOWL PINEAPPLE CAKE

This cake is SO delicious and quite possibly one of the easiest cakes I've ever made. It only requires one bowl and you can put the frosting on it while it's warm. Trust me, it'll make your next potluck SO much simpler.

SERVINGS: 15 **PREP TIME:** 10 MINUTES **BAKE TIME:** 35 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

CAKE
2 cups All-Purpose Flour
1 1/2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon baking soda
1.5 teaspoons vanilla extract
pinch of salt
20 oz can of crushed pineapple tidbits

FROSTING
1 8 oz pkg cream cheese softened
1 stick butter softened
pinch of salt
1-2 cups of powdered sugar

DIRECTIONS FOR CAKE:

01. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9 by 13 cake pan

02. In a large bowl, add the flour, sugar, baking soda, and pinch salt.

03. All at once add the eggs, vanilla, and pineapple. Using a fork, stir the dough until mixed (don't overmix).

04. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 35-40 minutes (check at the 30 mark) until golden brown and crackled on top.

05. Cool for 5-10 minutes and then frost!

DIRECTIONS FOR FROSTING:

01. Beat together the butter and cream cheese until creamy.

02. Add the pinch of salt and then the powdered sugar, a bit at a time.

03. Spread the frosting on the warm cake. Top with chopped nuts.

Many years ago, when we lived in northern WI, I had the pleasure of spending quite a bit of time with a dear older lady from our church. We would often take the youth group to her home for the dessert part of the progressive dinner (does anyone know what that is?). This is the cake she served many of those times.

BEST OLD-FASHIONED PEANUT BUTTER CAKE

This old-fashioned Peanut Butter Cake brings the best of creamy peanut butter and sweet cake together in an all-time family favorite! This recipe comes together quickly and makes a good-sized sheet cake perfect for sharing.

SERVINGS: 12 **PREP TIME:** 15 MINUTES **BAKE TIME:** 35 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

2 cups All-Purpose flour
1 cups white sugar
1 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup hot coffee
1/2 cup butter, melted
1/2 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup oil
2 eggs room temperature
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 teaspoon vanilla

DIRECTIONS

01. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 1/2 sheet pan or 9 by 13 cake pan.
02. Mix dry ingredients in a small bowl.
03. Whisk the coffee and butter together in a large bowl.
04. Add peanut butter and oil to the coffee and butter, whisk until smooth.
05. Add milk, vanilla, and eggs to the coffee mixture. Whisk well. Incorporate the dry ingredients a little at a time. Mix well.
06. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 30 minutes for a sheet cake and 40 minutes for a 9 by 13 pan.
07. Frost with coffee buttercream and top with crushed salted peanuts.

COFFEE BUTTERCREAM

The perfect top for the peanut butter cake, this buttercream has a subtle coffee flavor and delightful buttery texture.

SERVINGS: 1.5 CUPS **PREP TIME:** 10 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

2 sticks butter, softened unsalted

2 cups powdered sugar add up to an additional 1/2 cup until desired consistency is achieved

3 tablespoons strong coffee

DIRECTIONS

01. Beat the butter until light and fluffy.

02. Add the powdered sugar a bit at a time.

03. Add the coffee until the desired consistency is achieved.

CHERRY CAKE

A perfectly sweet, moist, and flavorful cherry cake! You'll love how easy and tasty this one is.

SERVINGS: 12
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
BAKE TIME: 30 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

2 and 1/8 cups flour
1 1/3 cups sugar
3 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1/2 cup butter, room temp
1/2 cup maraschino cherry juice
1/3 cup maraschino cherries, cut small
1/4 cup milk room temperature
4 egg whites room temperature

DIRECTIONS

01. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9 by 13 inch cake pan or 1/4 sheet pan.

02. Sift together the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt.

03. Beat the butter to creamy first, then SLOWLY add milk, then cherries and juice.

04. Add them to dry ingredients. Beat mixture for 2 minutes.

05. Beat the egg whites separately. Gently fold into the batter.

06. Pour into prepared pans. Bake for 30 minutes or until cooked through. (check at the 25 minute mark)

CHERRY FROSTING

Perfect for cherry cake!

INGREDIENTS

1 cup butter, room temp
3 cups powdered sugar
1/3-1/2 cup maraschino cherries, cut small
1/4 tsp salt

DIRECTIONS

01. In a large bowl, cream together the butter and powdered sugar. Be sure to add the powdered sugar slowly to minimize mess.

02. Mix until well blended, then increase mixer speed and allow to mix for 3 minutes or until fluffy.

03. Add cherries and salt and mix until incorporated. Spread on cooled cake.

this cake has become a fast favorite with readers.

ULTIMATE TRES LECHES CAKE (MILK CAKE)

This Tres Leches cake recipe creates the richest, most yummy homemade cake recipe you'll ever put in your face. Just the batter is enough to make you stop your life, sit down on the floor, and smile. It's heavenly!

SERVINGS: 12 **PREP TIME:** 20 MINUTES **BAKE TIME:** 30 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 stick 1/2 cup room temperature butter
1 cup sugar
5 eggs room temperature and separated
1 can coconut milk
1 can evaporated milk
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1/2 teaspoon vanilla bean paste for vanilla extract
for whipped cream top:
1 1/2 cups whipping cream
1 cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

01. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease and flour one 9x13 inch baking pan very well!
02. Sift flour and baking powder together in a small bowl, set aside.
03. Cream the butter or margarine and the 1 cup sugar together until well blended.
04. Add egg whites and the 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract and beat for about 4 minutes on high.
05. Add the egg yolks and beat on medium, just until well combined.
06. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture a little at a time, mix until well blended (you may need to scrape the bowl with a spatula after each addition.
07. Pour batter into prepared pan.
08. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 30 minutes or until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool.
09. Pierce cake several times with a fork, chopstick, or skewer. Really...lot's of holes!
10. Whisk the coconut milk, condensed milk, and evaporated milk together. Slowly pour over the top of the cooled cake.
11. Whip whipping cream, the 1 cup of powdered sugar. and the additional 1 teaspoon vanilla together until thick--about 5 minutes at high speed. (watch it though, too long and you have butter!)
12. Spread over the top of cake. Chill in the fridge for at least 1 hour before serving, the longer the better!

Tips for cake making supah success!

But guys, the best way to make yummy cakes is to JUST DO IT. Practice makes perfect. So get in the kitchen and bake a cake!

Take your butter out the night before and don't microwave it!
"If you microwave butter, if you melt it at all, the fats are separated and it never comes back to its original state." Amy from Amy's Cupcake Shoppe says. So, unless you are very, very careful, the microwave can completely destroy your recipe.

Make sure your eggs, milk, butter, and vanilla are at room temp. This really does give the best results. IF you don't have the time…you can totally stick the eggs in a bowl of lukewarm water for a while. It will help.

Spend extra time whipping your butter and sugar together. Makes for a light and fluffy cake!

Instead of using flour for your cake pans… use cocoa. I KNOW, totally cool.

Try to be precise with your measurements. Too much sugar gets cracky edges (is that a thing ;)) and too much flour will get a cracked top.

When you pour your batter in the pan, give the pan a couple drops on the counter to spread it out and help remove air pockets.

Be very careful not to over-bake.
Slightly underdone cupcakes taste much better than overdone, dry, and cracked ones. "As soon as you touch the top and it springs back, it's done." say Amy.