

A Deadly Feast

Book 9 of the Key West Food Critic Mysteries

Recipe

Mojito Cake

In the eighth Key West mystery, Hayley and her mother Janet are catering a Key West/Havana conference at the Truman Little White House. This is the dessert they serve for the final dinner. And it is the perfect recipe to celebrate *Death on the Menu!*

The basis of this recipe came from a cookbook called *Cuba!—Recipes and Stories from the Cuban Kitchen*. I love lime cake and yellow cake and whipped cream, so you can imagine that this recipe was irresistible. I know Mojitos require rum, and yet I am not a big fan of alcohol-flavored desserts. So I chose to leave the rum extract out of the cake, and instead add a teaspoon of rum. This gives it a little soupçon of flavor without overwhelming the cake. I also reduced the salt in the batter and the rum in the frosting. You can adjust the rum upward to a tablespoon if you choose.

Ingredients for the cake

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder (low-sodium works fine)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Two sticks unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2 cups sugar
- Four eggs, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons lime zest
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
- Half cup whole milk
- 1 teaspoon rum

For the lime mint syrup

- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, tightly packed
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed lime juice
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon dark rum

Thin slices of lime, or lime zest, or mint leaves, for decoration
Prepare two 9 inch cake pans by buttering them and lining with parchment paper. Butter the paper too. Preheat the oven to 350. Mix the dry ingredients for the cake together and set this aside. In your KitchenAid, food processor, or with an electric beater, beat the butter well with the sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time. Mix in the vanilla extract, the lime zest, and the rum. Fold in the dry ingredients, don't overmix. Stir in the milk.

Divide the batter into the two prepared pans and bake about 30 minutes until the cakes spring back when touched. Cool for 10 minutes in the pan, and then remove them from the pans and cool completely.

For the lime mint syrup, heat the sugar and water in a small pan until the sugar is dissolved. Turn off the heat and stir in the mint leaves. Let them steep for 10 minutes, then strain them out and stir in the lime juice. Paint this glaze onto each layer of cake with a pastry brush. Whip the cream and sugar until stiff, and stir in the rum. Drop half of the whipped cream onto the first layer. Place the second layer on top and spread the remainder of the cream over that. Decorate with thin slices of lime or mint leaves as desired.