Italian Cream Cake with Coconut & Buttercream

Cooking with Confidence with Martha Stewart

🕐 1,5h   🍴 2 Servings

Level up your cooking technique and boost your confidence in the kitchen with Martha's recipes! Italian cream cake isn't Italian at all—it's a staple sweet in America's Southern States! This dessert features a pecan and coconut cake with cream cheese buttercream. The trick to mastering the perfect frosting is beating room temp ingredients together until it's fluffy. The result is worth the effort! (2p serves 8; 4p serves 12)

1. Prep baking dish

Preheat oven to 350°F with a rack in the center. Set **all of the cream cheese** and **½ cup butter** out in a medium bowl to soften at room temperature until step 5. Transfer **coconut** to a small skillet; set over medium-low heat. Cook, stirring, until lightly toasted, 1–2 minutes (watch closely). Transfer to a plate. Wipe out skillet. Grease a medium (8x8-inch) baking dish with **butter**.

2. Toast pecans

Return skillet to medium-low heat and add **pecans**. Cook, stirring, until lightly toasted, 3–4 minutes. Allow pecans to cool; coarsely chop. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt **4 tablespoons butter** in microwave, 30–60 seconds. Allow butter to cool slightly, then whisk in **sour cream, ½ cup granulated sugar, 1 large egg + 1 large egg yolk** (save white for own use), and **1½ teaspoons vanilla**.

3. Make batter

In a 2nd medium bowl, whisk together **flour, 2 tablespoons buttermilk powder, 1 teaspoon each of baking powder and salt**, and **¼ teaspoon baking soda**. Add half of the flour mixture to bowl with **egg mixture** and mix until smooth. Stir in **⅔ cup water**, then remaining flour mixture and mix until smooth. Gently stir in **half each of the toasted coconut and chopped pecans**.

4. Bake cake

Pour **batter** into prepared baking dish. Bake on center oven rack until cake is lightly golden around edges and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, rotating halfway through baking, 20–25 minutes total. Cool cake in dish for 10 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack and allow cake to cool completely. Cut cooled cake into 2 (4x8-inch) rectangles.

5. Make frosting

Use an electric mixer to beat **softened butter and cream cheese** until creamy and combined. Add **confectioners' sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla**, and **a pinch of salt**. Starting on low, beat until sugar is combined (it may look curdled at this point, that's okay). Increase speed to medium-high and beat until **frosting** is light and fluffy, 3–4 minutes.

6. Finish & serve

Place **one cake layer** on a serving platter. Spread **⅓ of the frosting** over top of cake in an even layer. Top with **second cake layer**. Use **half of the remaining frosting** to spread a thin coat around sides of cake for a "naked" effect. Spread **remaining frosting** over top layer. Sprinkle with **remaining coconut and pecans**. Chill for at least 30 minutes before slicing. Enjoy!