

Culinary Corner

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Summer is the perfect time for an elegant outdoor tea party, and this delicious cake deserves your best china tea cups. I have to admit, though, that I have been known to enjoy a slice and restorative cup of tea with hands and dungarees dirty from working in the garden. Whether you go with high style or a break from your work, try to use as many organic ingredients as you can find.

Lemon Ginger Buttermilk Pound Cake with Fresh Herbs and Flowers

Cake:

1 cup butter
2 cups granulated sugar
3 large eggs
Grated rind from 2-3 large lemons
1-2 tbsp. fresh grated ginger
1 tsp. vanilla
3 cups white flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1 cup buttermilk

Glaze:

1/3 cup granulated sugar
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice



Butter and flour a 10-cup bundt or tube pan. Preheat oven to 350°F. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt and set aside. Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time and beat until well blended. Mix in vanilla, ginger, and lemon rind. Add flour mixture alternately with the buttermilk and beat until well blended after each addition. Bake for 45–55 minutes. The cake is ready when browned on top and when a toothpick inserted into the cake comes away clean. Let the cake rest for 5 minutes before unmolding.

Mix the glaze ingredients as soon the cake is put in the oven. Stir periodically to incorporate the sugar into the juice (it's fine if some of the sugar remains granulated). Prick all sides of the unmolded cake with a toothpick. Brush all sides of the cake with liquid glaze. Use all of the glaze (it will seem like a lot). Cool completely.

Now comes the fun part. Go out into your garden (or organic farmer's market) and choose the freshest and most whimsical herbs and flowers you can find to use as decoration. (Just make sure to confirm first whether your choices are edible!) I often make a crown of fresh mint, basil, or mild-flavoured garden oregano around the base of the cake. Violets, pansies, nasturtiums, mallow, anise hyssop flower, mint flower, echinacea, and calendula are all lovely placed on top of the cake (the sticky glaze should hold them in place). Another beautiful format is to place a small container of water inside the hole created by the tube pan and create a flower arrangement in the centre as you would in a vase.