

LETTIE'S LIGHTNING CAKE WITH WILD STRAWBERRY JAM (serves 8)

*Reprinted from *Kitchen Gypsy* with permission by Chef Joanne Weir

Ingredients:

Wild Strawberry Jam:

- About 1 ½ pounds or 1 quart wild or cultivated strawberries, hulled, washed & sliced
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

Lightning Cake:

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup whole milk
- 3 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 1/3 cups granulated sugar
- 1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Powdered sugar for dusting

Instructions:

1. To make the jam, in a bowl, using a potato masher or a large fork, crush the strawberries coarsely. In a saucepan, combine the berries, sugar, and lemon juice, place over medium-high heat, and cook, stirring constantly, until the sugar dissolves and the mixture comes to a full rolling boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring constantly, until the mixture has thickened slightly, 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and, using a large spoon, skim off any foam from the surface.
2. Ladle the jam into a clean container, let cool, cover tightly, and refrigerate. You should have about 3 cups. You will need 1 cup for the cake. The remainder will keep refrigerated for up to 3 weeks. For longer storage, process jars of jam in a hot-water bath for 10 minutes.
3. To make the cake, preheat the oven to 350F. Butter an 8-inch round cake pan, then line the pan bottom with parchment paper.
4. In a small saucepan, combine the butter and milk and place over low heat until the butter melts. Remove from the heat. In a mixer fitted with the beater, combine the

eggs and granulated sugar and beat on medium speed until ivory colored, fluffy, and smooth, 3 to 4 minutes. Sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt over the top of the butter-sugar mixture, then, using a rubber spatula, fold in the flour mixture just until evenly blended. Add the warm milk mixture and the vanilla and fold just until all of the ingredients are thoroughly mixed. Do not overmix.

5. Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake until a wooden toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 45-50 minutes. Let cool for 30 minutes in the pan on a cooling rack. Run a thin knife blade along the inside edge of the pan to loosen the cake, then invert the cake onto the rack, lift off the pan, and peel off the parchment.
6. Mark the midpoint of the height of the cake with a shallow cut. Then, with the cut as a guide, and using a serrated knife, score the cake $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep around the entire perimeter of the cake. Slip a string several inches longer than the cake's circumference in the score line, cross the ends of the string, and pull the ends away from each other to cut the cake into 2 even layers. Alternatively, using the serrated knife and a sawing motion, cut the cake horizontally into 2 layers.
7. To assemble the cake, place the bottom layer on a cake plate or stand. Using an offset spatula, spread 1 cup jam evenly over the top of the layer. Top with the second layer. Dust the top of the cake with powdered sugar. Cut into wedges and serve.