

# chiffon cake

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## Chiffon Cake

The bridge between a butter cake and a foam cake, and a genuinely modern invention: patented in 1927 by Harry Baker, a Los Angeles insurance salesman who kept the recipe secret for twenty years before selling it to General Mills. The secret was vegetable oil, in a category where every other cake used butter.

Oil stays liquid at room temperature, so a chiffon eats moist straight from the fridge, which no butter cake does.

## What makes it work

- **Two batters, folded together.** A yolk batter with oil, liquid and flour, and a meringue of the whites. The meringue is the only leavening beyond a small amount of baking powder.
- **Oil, not butter.** This is the whole design. See [baking fats](#).
- **Whip the whites to firm-but-glossy peaks** and fold in three additions, sacrificing the first third to loosen the yolk batter.
- **Ungreased tube pan, cooled upside down**, exactly as for [angel food cake](#). The batter must climb.
- **Do not open the oven for the first 25 minutes.** A chiffon is the cake most sensitive to a draught.

## Ingredients

One 25 cm tube pan. Serves 12.

### Yolk batter:

- 6 egg yolks
- 100 g caster sugar
- 120 ml neutral oil
- 180 ml water, [milk](#), or fresh orange juice
- 240 g cake flour
- 10 g baking powder
- 4 g fine salt
- zest of 1 orange or 1 [lemon](#)
- 2 tsp vanilla — see [Pure vanilla extract](#)

### Meringue:

- 6 egg whites
- 4 g cream of tartar
- 100 g caster sugar

## Method

Heat the oven to **165 °C / 325 °F**.

Whisk the yolks with 100 g sugar until pale, then whisk in the oil and the liquid. Sift in the flour, baking powder and salt and whisk smooth. Add the zest and vanilla.

Whip the whites with the cream of tartar to soft peaks, then rain in the 100 g of sugar and whip to firm, glossy peaks.

Fold a third of the meringue into the yolk batter to slacken it, then fold in the rest in two additions.

Pour into an ungreased tube pan. Bake **50–55 minutes**, until the top springs back and a skewer comes out clean.

Invert immediately and cool completely, at least two hours, before releasing.

## Notes

- **Pandan, matcha, coffee and citrus** are the classic Asian bakery flavours; chiffon is the standard birthday cake base across much of East and Southeast Asia. Replace part of the liquid with the infusion.
- A chiffon baked in a lined round tin will still work but rises perhaps a third less.
- **Keeps three days** covered, and is the rare cake that is still good cold.

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