

## Orange Spanish Sponge Cake

*Pan d'Espanya (pan Esponjado)*

*Pan d'Espanya (pan esponjado)* is the iconic orange chiffon cake that has been made for generations from the Jews of Spain.

This featherlight cake originally made from the juicy Seville oranges is moist and tangy from the juice and zest and fragrant with a hint of delicate orange blossom water.

Pan d'Espanya is delightful served as a tea time treat or offered as an irresistible finale served with berries and lightly whipped cream. I urge you to try it – keeps so well too.

8 large eggs

1 cup caster (superfine) sugar

½ cup vegetable or sunflower oil

2 tsp finely grated orange zest

¾ cup fresh orange juice

1 tsp orange blossom water

2 cups sifted cake flour

2 heaped tsp baking powder

a pinch of salt

¾ tsp cream of tartar

**Preheat** the oven to 180°C (350°F). You will need a 25cm (10in) ungreased chiffon tin (tube pan).

**Separate** the eggs and place six egg yolks in a bowl. Put 8 egg whites in a large clean bowl and cover with plastic wrap, keeping at room temperature.

**In** the bowl of a free-standing electric mixer, beat the sugar and egg yolks at high speed until pale and creamy. Stir in the oil, orange zest, orange juice and orange blossom water. In a separate bowl combine the flour, baking powder and salt. Reduce the speed to low and add the flour mixture to the sugar and egg mixture. Beat to combine, scrapping down the sides of the bowl as needed.

**Beat** the egg whites in a clean bowl with the whisk attachment, until foamy and shiny. Add the cream of tartar. Continue to beat until they hold stiff peaks.

**In** two batches, gently fold the egg whites into the batter with a large silicone spatula or a metal spoon.

**Pour** the batter into the ungreased chiffon cake tin and smooth the surface with a spoon. Bake for 55-60 minutes or until the cake is firm to the touch and a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Immediately invert the cake tin on a wire rack. Let the cake cool completely before removing from the tin (about 1½ hours) To remove the cake from the tin loosen the outer edges of the cake with a long, thin knife around the inside of the pan and the centre core. Gently ease out onto a wire rack.

***Stella's Hint:***

- To freeze. Seal the cooled baked cake with plastic wrap and freeze for up to 1 month. To defrost, remove the wrapping, and defrost for 3-4 hours at room temperature.

➤ ***Twist on Tradition:***

For the rose water syrup:

2 cups water

1 cup caster sugar

2 tsp rose water

1 tsp vanilla extract.

In a small pan over a high heat bring the ingredients to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat. Add a punnet of hulled and halved strawberries to the syrup and serve warm.