

HEAVENLY CAKE

Torta Angelica



This is an easy-to-make dessert that is delicious and light. Have the cake ready and the berries marinating before your guests arrive, and just assemble when you're ready to serve it. Any leftover cake is just as good toasted for breakfast.

Serves 8

CAKE

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for the cake pan
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for the cake pan
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- Grated zest of 1 orange
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon salt, plus a pinch for the egg whites
- 4 egg whites

ASSEMBLY

- 2 cups quartered fresh strawberries
- ½ cup sweet dessert wine, such as sweet Malvasia or Torcolato
- 1 cup chilled heavy cream

For the cake, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease an 8-inch springform cake pan with olive oil. Sprinkle the inside of the pan with flour, and rotate the pan to coat the sides and bottom evenly. Tap out any excess flour. Sift the 1½ cups flour and the baking powder onto a piece of parchment.

In a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the whole eggs and the confectioners' sugar at medium speed until creamy, smooth and doubled in volume. Add the orange zest, vanilla, and ¼ teaspoon salt, and beat well to distribute. Alternate

adding a little at a time of the ½ cup olive oil and the flour mixture, stirring gently after each addition, beginning and ending with the flour. In a clean mixer bowl fitted with the whisk, whip the egg whites with a pinch of salt until they hold stiff peaks when the beaters are lifted from them. Add about a fourth of the whites to the batter, and with a rubber spatula gently fold them in, scraping the mixture from the bottom of the bowl over the whites. Fold in the remaining whites in the same way.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan, and bake until the top is a deep golden brown and springs back quickly when pressed with your finger, about 40 minutes. Cool the cake on a wire rack about 20 minutes. Run a thin-bladed knife around the edges of the pan, and release the sides of the pan. Cool the cake completely before serving.

While the cake is baking, in a small bowl, toss the strawberries with the wine, and let sit at room temperature so the berries give up their juices. Whip the cream to soft peaks, and keep chilled.

To serve, slice the cake into eight wedges. Brush each slice with some of the wine juices from the berry bowl, and spoon the berries and remaining juice over top. Dollop whipped cream on each portion, and serve.