

The Great American Cake

Ambrosia Cake



Ambrosia, food of the gods in Greek and Roman mythology, is something a bit more humble in most American households, where it's better known as a chilled fruit salad, often made with mandarin oranges, pineapple, and coconut. The tall and tropical ambrosia cake, made with angel food cake, pineapple curd, and orange and vanilla frostings, has more heavenly aspirations.

To make this cake you'll need:

- 1/4 cup pineapple juice
- 2 large eggs plus 1 egg yolk
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- Pinch salt
- 3 cups vanilla buttercream frosting*
- 1 teaspoon grated zest plus 2 teaspoons juice from 1 orange
- 1 (9-inch) angel food cake*
- 2 (15-ounce) cans mandarin orange slices, drained and cut in half lengthwise
- 2 cups sweetened shredded coconut, toasted
- 1 (20-ounce) can pineapple slices, drained and cut into half moons

For the pineapple curd: Bring pineapple juice to boil in saucepan over medium heat. Whisk eggs, yolk, and sugar in medium bowl. Whisking constantly, slowly pour hot juice into egg mixture, then return mixture to saucepan and cook, stirring constantly, until thick enough to cling to spoon, 2 to 3 minutes. Off heat, stir in butter and salt, then strain into small bowl. Cover surface directly with plastic wrap and refrigerate until thickened, at least 1 hour.

For the orange frosting: Transfer 1 cup vanilla frosting to small bowl. Stir in orange zest and juice.

To assemble: Cut cake horizontally into 4 even layers. Place bottom layer on platter. Spread 1/2 cup orange frosting over cake and top with 20 orange slices. Place next layer on top of oranges and spread with pineapple curd. Top with next cake layer and spread with remaining orange frosting and 20 more orange slices. Finish with top cake layer and coat top and sides of cake with vanilla frosting. Press toasted coconut into sides and decorate with orange and pineapple slices.

* Go to www.cookscountry.com for frosting and cake recipes, or use your own.