

Classic Yellow Cake

A nostalgic American bakery touchstone reimaged through refined patisserie technique. Unlike white cakes that rely solely on whipped egg whites, a true yellow cake draws its signature golden hue, rich custardy depth, and plush, fine-grained crumb from whole eggs paired with extra egg yolks. Blending European-style butter with pure vanilla and a touch of cultured buttermilk yields an exceptionally moist, tender structure that cuts cleanly while remaining soft and decadent.

Planning

Prep Time: 20 minutes	Cook Time & Temp: 28–32 minutes @ 350°F (175°C)	Chill/Set Time: 1 hour (cooling)	Yield & Servings: Two 8-inch or 9-inch round layers (12–14 servings)
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Preparation

Materials: Two 8-inch or 9-inch round cake pans (2-inch depth) Stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment Sifter / fine-mesh sieve Two parchment paper rounds Flexible silicone spatula Wire cooling rack	Prep: Bring butter, whole eggs, egg yolks, and buttermilk to true room temperature (68°F–70°F / 20°C–21°C). Butter the cake pans, line bases with parchment rounds, and flour lightly, tapping out excess. Sift the cake flour, baking powder, baking soda, and fine sea salt together twice. Whisk whole eggs, yolks, vanilla extract, and buttermilk together in a glass measuring pitcher. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C) with rack in the center position.	Dry Ingredients: Cake Flour 300 g Baking Powder 10 g (2½ tsp) Baking Soda 2 g (½ tsp) Fine Sea Salt 4 g (¾ tsp) Wet Ingredients: Unsalted Butter 227 g (1 cup / 2 sticks) Granulated Sugar 300 g (1½ cups) Whole Eggs 150 g (3 large) Large Egg Yolks 36 g (2 large) Buttermilk, Cultured 240 ml (1 cup) Pure Vanilla Extract 10 ml (2 tsp)	Shopping Cake Flour (T45) Baking Powder Baking Soda Fine Sea Salt Unsalted Granulated Sugar. Fine Eggs, Grade A Large Buttermilk, Cultured Pure Vanilla Extract
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Method

STEP 1: Cream Butter & Sugar Fit stand mixer with paddle attachment. Beat softened butter and sugar on medium speed for 5–6 minutes until pale, light, and fluffy, pausing once to scrape down sides and bottom.

STEP 2: Emulsify the Eggs: Add eggs and yolks one at a time, beating for 30–45 seconds after each addition until fully emulsified before adding the next. Blend in vanilla extract.

STEP 3: Alternate Dry & Wet Additions: On lowest speed, add sifted dry ingredients in three additions, alternating with buttermilk in two additions (Dry → Buttermilk → Dry → Buttermilk → Dry). Mix just until combined; finish with 2–3 gentle hand folds using a spatula to avoid gluten development.

STEP 4: Pan & Level: Divide batter evenly between prepared cake pans (approx. 630 g per pan). Level tops smoothly with a small offset spatula. Tap pans lightly on the countertop once to dislodge large air pockets.

STEP 5: Bake: Bake at 350°F (175°C) for 28–32 minutes, until cake tops are springy to a gentle touch, edges begin pulling away slightly from pan walls, and a wooden tester inserted in center comes out clean.

STEP 6: Cool: Rest pans on a wire rack for 10–12 minutes. Run a thin offset spatula gently along pan rims, invert onto racks, peel away parchment circles, and let cool right-side up to room temperature.

Assemble

Trim any slight doming with a serrated knife so layers sit flat. Brush layers lightly with vanilla simple syrup if assembling ahead. Pipe a boundary dam of buttercream around the lower layer, fill the center with chocolate fudge frosting, lemon curd, or fruit compote, then seat the top layer and chill for 15 minutes before applying a smooth crumb coat and final finish.

Notes

Yolk Power: The two extra egg yolks supply lecithin for an ultra-stable emulsion and provide the rich golden tint and velvety mouthfeel that distinguishes a classic yellow cake from basic vanilla sponge.

Buttermilk Acidity: The mild lactic acid in buttermilk tenderizes flour proteins and reacts with the small measure of baking soda to create an exceptionally fine, melt-away crumb.

Storage: Wrap un-frosted layers tightly in plastic wrap once fully cool. Store at room temperature for up to 2 days, or double-wrap in plastic and foil to freeze for up to 2 months.

Applications & Plating Pairings

Classic Birthday Celebration: Layered and frosted with rich whipped dark chocolate ganache or chocolate fudge buttercream.

Citrus & Berry Entremets: Paired with tangy citrus curd (lemon or passionfruit) and masked with Swiss meringue or fondant buttercream.

Plated Afternoon Tea: Served in neat square cuts dusted with confectioners' sugar, accompanied by fresh raspberries and softly whipped chantilly cream.