



# Pastel de Tres Leches

## Tres Leches Cake

Serves 8



Jason Varney

This traditional Mexican treat is as convenient a make-ahead option as it is an impressive ending for a festive evening. It's soaked in a rich combination of heavy cream, evaporated milk, and sweetened condensed milk, which is why it's known as "three-milk" cake. As noted below, you can complete the cake a few days in advance—as long as it's been properly soaked and tightly covered, it will keep perfectly. Hold off on cutting until you're ready to serve.

—Chef Jose Garces

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From *The Latin Road Home* by Jose Garces, Lake Isle Press, 2012

### INGREDIENTS

#### CAKE

- 3 large eggs, separated
- 1 2/3 cups granulated sugar
- 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 3/4 tsp baking powder
- 1 3/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 cup + 1 Tbsp whole milk
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract

#### TRES LECHES SOAKING LIQUID

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 (12-oz) can evaporated milk
- 3/4 cup (sweetened condensed milk (half a 12-oz can)
- 1 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp ground cinnamon or canela
- 1/2 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt
- 1/4 cup dark rum or mezcal (optional)

### PREPARATION

Place a rack in the middle position and preheat the oven to 325°F.

**TO MAKE THE CAKE**, whip the egg whites on high speed in a clean, dry bowl while slowly adding the granulated sugar. Continue whipping the mixture until it is fluffy, shiny, and firm but not dry. With the mixer still running, slowly add the yolks.

Sift the flour with the baking powder and fold into the egg mixture. Whisk in the milk and vanilla.

Lightly coat a 9 by 9-inch square cake pan or casserole with cooking spray and pour in the batter. Bake until the center of the cake springs back to the touch and a wooden skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean, 40 to 45 minutes, rotating the pan 180 degrees about halfway through the baking time.

Cool the cake in the pan on wire rack for 10 minutes.

**TO MAKE THE SOAKING LIQUID**, while the cake is still warm, whisk together all the ingredients for the soaking liquid until the sugar dissolves. Poke the top of the cake 8 to 10 times with a fork to make evenly spaced holes, then pour the soaking liquid over the warm cake to completely saturate it. Leave the cake to soak at room temperature until the liquid is fully absorbed and the cake has cooled to room temperature. Cover the pan tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 3 days.

Fifteen to 20 minutes before serving, take the cake out of the refrigerator and leave it to sit and soften at room temperature. Cut the cake into individual rounds (see photo) or squares and serve.