

## **Great Cake, By The Pound**

*“If the people have no bread let them eat cake.”*

(Ascribed to Marie Antoinette)

I know that everyone has some pretty high expectations this time of the year. I can't speak for others who prepare a food column but there's an awful lot of pressure to come up with really nifty recipes every week, particularly as we approach the Christmas holidays.

One of the biggest difficulties is accomplishing this while staying politically correct. The last thing I want to do is create controversy or alienate any specific group out there. For instance, what once was a traditional Christmas pudding now becomes a Non Secular Non Specific Winter Holiday Dessert, which still may be discriminating against weight challenged revelers. I mean it gets terribly complicated and you often find yourself in a “no win” situation.

I started out this week with what I believed would be something of a coop in the world of compelling holiday recipes...Roasted Partridge in a Pear Tree. I'm pretty sure that this dish isn't associated with any specific geopolitical organization and frankly, I don't think most people even know what a partridge is. After a couple of hours on the Internet I did finally manage to source a company that will ship you fresh partridge but the Pear Tree aspect of the recipe really threw me, not to mention the cost of shipping a Pear Tree from one state to another.

When I find myself in situations like this I tend to gravitate to foods that have been favorites over the years. You know what I mean. I'm sure you have old family recipes that never fail to bring out great comments and seconds all around. This recipe is exactly that although I have no idea where it originated, (which may be a good thing.)



### **No Fail Sour Cream Pound Cake**

3 cups sugar  
1 cup sour cream  
6 eggs, separated and at room temperature  
2 sticks real butter, unsalted  
3 cups sifted all purpose flour  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon lemon extract  
1 teaspoon real vanilla

Allow butter to come up to room temperature then cream it with your sugar. Add egg yolks one at a time and beat gently after each until all are in and mixed. Sift your flour 3 times. Add your soda to the sour cream.

Incorporate your flour and sour cream mix alternately a little at a time into the sugar mixture. Beat your egg whites until stiff peaks form. Add your vanilla into the egg whites as you beat them and then fold into your batter gently until well mixed.

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Pour your batter into a well greased and lightly floured tube pan or bundt pan. Bake for approximately 1 ½ hours until nicely browned. Allow to cool before removing from pan and slicing.

The recipe is rich and uncomplicated. Use your imagination as to how you serve this pound cake but you'll find that it is really good just on its own. Some of you may want to use this pound cake as a base for a more traditional "old world" recipe, which includes the use of hard sauce as a topping. Hard sauce is traditionally served over an English Plum Pudding but its great with this pound cake. Here's a simple, easy to make recipe:

**English Hard Sauce**  
(makes about two cups)

½ cup softened butter  
1 ½ cup sifted confectioner's sugar  
2 tablespoons rum or brandy (may substitute with 1 teaspoon vanilla extract)

Cream your butter with the confectioner's sugar until light and fluffy. Stir in your rum, brandy or vanilla according to the recipe. Two cups = 8 servings

Another terrific topping for your pound cake is a recipe that every cook should eventually master, Zabaione. This creamy, ultra rich topping has so many great uses it amazes me that so few people outside of the world of professional chefs can make it. Try it with fresh berries tossed in some time!

### **Zabaione**

(makes about 2 cups)

1 large egg  
2 egg yolks  
small pinch of salt  
1/3 cup rum or bourbon whiskey  
1/3 cup dry white French vermouth  
½ cup sugar

Whisk all the ingredients together for 1 minute in a stainless mixing bowl. Place over a saucepan of boiling water and whisk over moderately low heat for 4 to 5 minutes, until the sauce becomes thick, foamy, and warm to your finger. Do not bring it to a simmer and scramble the eggs, but you must heat it enough for it to thicken. Serve warm or cold.

The sauce will remain foamy for 20 to 30 minutes. If it separates simply beat it briefly over your heat source. If you wish to reform the sauce, whisk in a stiffly beaten egg white.

From the wine shelf this week we have selected an excellent red wine for personal use or as a nice gift when visiting friends for dinner. The 2002 Peirano Estate Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon from Lodi in California is one of those really great finds. It is a serious red wine presented in an impressive package but available to wine lovers at a bargain price.

This 100% Cabernet Sauvignon comes from 29-year-old vines located right on the estate. This wine's aromas include dark fruit – blackberry, black raspberry, black currant – with elements of anise, cedar and root beer. A sip fills the mouth with blackberry pie, black licorice and tea, while maintaining absolute dryness and firm tannins. It is ready to drink now, as well as structured enough to age gracefully for the next 5 to 8 years.

Make sure to let us know if you have any food or wine questions at 888-288-0668 or contact us online at [www.winedog.com](http://www.winedog.com). Cheers!