



RUSSIAN HONEY CAKE — ENGLISH VERSION

This speciality is a fast-seller in Bosnian bakeries. The Russian honey cake or „Medovnik” is a cake made of many honey-flavoured dough-layers. The preparation takes some time but you'll love the result. My version is the most popular one of Balkans. The frosting of the Russian original is made with caramel and nuts and is even sweeter than this one. The honey gives the cake a wonderful flavour, the sour-cream frosting makes it fresh.

Cake-layer ingredients:

3 eggs (medium-sized)
300 g sugar
80 g unsalted butter
4 heaped tablespoons fluid honey
700-800 g plain flour
2 teaspoons baking soda

Sour-cream frosting ingredients:

6 cups sour-cream (=1500 g)
150 g sugar
2 sachets vanilla sugar



Layer-dough:

Fill a medium-sized saucepan half-way with water and bring it to boil. Afterwards lower the heat to medium. Set a bowl over the sauce-pan in which you combine eggs and sugar. Stir constantly until light and foamy. You can use an egg whisk (it takes about 5 min) or you use your kitchen machine/mixer on lower speed. Melt the butter and add it to the egg-mixture, whisk and then add the honey. Stir another minute, remove from heat.

Mix 700 g of the flour with the baking soda. Whisk the flour gradually into the egg-mixture (use a tablespoon). If whisking by spoon gets too hard, use your hands and knead the dough well. If the dough is still sticky, add another 100 g of flour. That should be enough to prevent it from sticking to your hands. Put the dough on a lightly-floured surface and knead it once more. Shape it into a ball and put it into a lightly floured bowl to rest.

Prepare a cup filled with flour, some sheets of baking parchment and 1 large baking tray.

Weighing and dividing the dough:

Weigh your dough-ball. Mine had 1580 g. Your cake should have at least 10 layers, so you'll need to divide the 1580 g by 10. Then you know how heavy each of the layers, in which you cut your dough-ball, has to be. I wanted to make my cake with 15 layers and divided the 1580 g by 15. So all of my layers had about 105 g. You needn't be too exact but weighing helps you to produce layers of nearly the same thickness (if you are a perfectionist ;-)



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Options:

Option 1: The dough is sufficient for one big cake OR two smaller ones. You can for example make two smaller ones and fill one immediately and freeze the second cake. I decided to make two smaller cakes, fill one and freeze the layers of the second cake. Then prepare a plate (21 cm diameter) or the base of a springform mold. With 105 g per layer you'll have pretty thin layers. I recommend „baking-beginners“ dividing the dough only by 10 so your layers (about 160 g heavy each) will be a bit thicker and easier to handle. Option 2: You take a plate with 26 cm diameter and make one large cake. Your dough-pieces (layers) should then have 150 g each.

Rolling-out and baking:

Preheat the oven to 200°C (350 degrees F). After weighing each piece of dough, take the first one, put it onto a well-floured surface, roll it out (you can also sprinkle the top with a little flour to keep the dough from sticking to your rolling pin). Place the plate or base from a springform mold over your rolled dough and trace around it with a pizza cutter or knife to get a perfect circle. Keep the scraps for later. Transfer the dough to a large sheet of parchment paper and bake 2 at a time (if you use the option with the smaller plate and two cakes) at 180°C (350°F) for 4-5 minutes or until golden. After baking put the layer immediately into a plastic bag on an even surface and close it (this prevents the layer from drying-out and breaking). Repeat with remaining layers. Put together all the scraps and form another dough-ball. Cut it again into pieces of the same weight, roll them out and continue like before (until all of the dough is used-up). Important: the layers tend to burn easily so don't leave them unobserved and take them out of the oven as soon as they get a little bit of colour. The texture of the layers is now like the texture of cookies. They break easily so handle them carefully and keep them in the plastic bag until they are completely cool.

Frosting:

In a bowl whisk together the sour-cream with the vanilla sugar and sugar. Use all of your layers for a large cake OR you divide the layers into an equal number of layers for each of your two smaller cakes. If you've chosen the option with two cakes and want to freeze one of them, then divide the ingredients for the frosting, because the ingredients from above are enough for filling two smaller cakes. In order to freeze the cake you can put the layers into a plastic bag and freeze them (you can keep them frozen for half a year minimum). Or you freeze your cake already filled and cut into equal-sized pieces. I'd recommend you freezing only the layers and preparing a fresh frosting after unfreezing. Take one of your layers, which is not so perfect and use it for decorating. You can crush it with a rolling pin or pulse it in a food processor until you have fine crumbs.

Filling:

Take the first layer, put it on a cake plate and spread about 3 tablespoons of the frosting on each cake layer (don't skimp on it since the cake needs to absorb some of the cream to become soft). It is also ok if the frosting flows down the sides of the cake. Press the layers down gently as you got to keep them from having air gaps. Apply some frosting on the last layer above and dust it with the breadcrumbs. Refrigerate overnight. This cake needs time to absorb the cream and become soft, so be patient.