

GATHERING
SETTING THE NATURAL TABLE



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*WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY
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Olive Oil Cake

One of my oldest and best friends, Christopher Lier, just happens to be one of the best pastry chefs in Los Angeles. Christopher and his wife, Amy, joined us for our holiday gathering. We made eggnog with candied citrus slices for the occasion. Later, we cracked walnuts to snack on while Christopher baked one of his elegant and delicious cakes. He kindly offered his recipe. We hope you enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

150g whole grain Sonora flour	3 eggs
120g cake flour (or all-purpose flour)	330g sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder	1½ cups olive oil
1½ teaspoons kosher salt	1½ cups milk
	lemon or orange zest to taste

PREPARATION

1. *Preheat oven to 350 degrees.*
2. *Place Sonora flour into a bowl and sift in the cake flour and baking powder. Add salt. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs. Add the sugar and zest and whisk once more. While whisking continuously, add the olive oil in a steady stream until emulsified, then slowly drizzle in the milk. Fold in the dry ingredients until well blended.*
3. *Evenly divide the batter into whatever molds you wish (first brushing the insides with a bit of olive oil to avoid sticking) and bake until a skewer comes out clean when inserted into the middle of the cake.*

I was introduced to this recipe while working at Nancy Silverton's restaurant Osteria Mozza under pastry chef Dhalia Narvaez. I'm not sure if it's Nancy's or Dhalia's recipe, but either way it's delicious! At the restaurant it was served in little two-bite tea cake sized portions with olive oil, gelato and pulled rosemary sugar. But it's a versatile cake that can be made in a number of ways: thinly layered with buttercream; or, due to the large amount of olive oil in the batter, it can be grilled for a crispy, charred exterior and a wonderfully moist, soft interior. I often like to make a mini bundt version with a lemon mousse in the center, or simply the way it's presented here, in a large bundt cake format with lemon glaze to finish. It's an easy cake to mix and bake, but has a serious decadence to it. You can use any olive oil, but the better the oil the better the cake. —*Christopher Lier*