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Chicago, IL**

### **Passover Thoughts**

For me, Passover is a time to reflect with my husband and children about one of the great Jewish holidays marking a culturally shared experience. Celebrating being Jewish connects me to my past generations, my grandma Elsie and grandpa George Grossman plus myriad souls before them, and helps me touch the survivor instinct in me and then pass that on to my 3 children, Gio, Ruby and Ella. We celebrate that strength every year with our Seder (of course the holiday is interwoven with food). This year at that time we have a foreign exchange student, Vincent, coming from France so we will get a chance to include someone from another country and culture in this beautiful ritual of my people.

### **Menu**

Traditional Seder Plate with Apple Walnut Charoses  
Gefilte Fish with grated Red Horseradish, and lots of it  
Spinach Matzo Ball Soup  
Sweet Potato Tzimmes  
Myrna's Beef Short Ribs with Celery leaves, Carrots and Potatoes  
Lemon Sponge Cake with Strawberries

### **Recipe**

#### **Passover Lemon Sponge Cake with Strawberries**

Passover and Easter both celebrate the coming of spring, and what could be a more delectable reminder than the first strawberries of the season? The marvelous thing about this cake is that your strawberries need not be at their prime, as they are glazed with sweet jam before topping the cake.

This is essentially an angel food cake with egg yolks added, making a pretty yellow crumb. Leavening comes only from whipped egg whites; flour is replaced by matzo cake meal and ground almonds. Chopped almonds add a great texture with the soft strawberries, sugary lemon glaze, and light cake. If you keep kosher or are lactose intolerant, you'll be glad to note that there is no dairy in this cake.

For the cake:

9 eggs, separated, whites at room temperature  
¾ cup sugar  
1 cup almonds, ground  
½ cup almonds, chopped  
¼ cup sifted matzo cake meal, plus extra for flouring the pan  
1 ½ teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice  
Freshly grated zest of 1 lemon

For the glaze:

¾ cup confectioner's sugar  
1 to 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice  
¼ teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
¼ teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest

To finish:

2 cups strawberries, green parts trimmed off, cut into chunks

1 cup apricot jam

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and grease a 9- or 10-inch springform pan and line the bottom with parchment paper. Flour the sides of the pan with sifted cake meal.
2. In a mixer fitted with a whisk attachment (or using a hand mixer), whip the egg whites until soft peaks form. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the sugar and continue whipping just until stiff and glossy, about 30 seconds more.
3. In another bowl, whip the egg yolks with the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar until light and fluffy. Fold in the egg whites. Gently fold in the ground almonds, chopped almonds, matzo meal, lemon juice, and lemon zest. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake until dry and spongy in the center, about 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes in the pan, then remove the sides of the pan and let cool completely on a wire rack. The cake will fall somewhat.
4. To make the glaze stir the ingredients together until smooth in a small bowl, adding lemon juice as needed until the glaze is pourable. Set the wire rack holding the cake on a sheet pan. Drizzle the glaze generously over the top of the cake, letting it trickle down the sides. Using a flexible spatula or pastry brush, gently spread the glaze over the sides of the cake, reusing any glaze that drips onto the baking sheet. Let set for at least 30 minutes before serving, or until the glaze is hardened. Transfer the cake to a serving platter, removing the pan bottom and parchment paper if desired.
5. To finish, in a medium saucepan, bring the jam and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water to a boil, stirring to break up any lumps. Working quickly, add the strawberries all at once and fold together with a spatula until evenly coated. Pour into the sunken center of the cake and gently spread into a circle on the surface, leaving a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch border all around. Let cool until set, about 30 minutes. Use a very sharp knife for slicing the cake.

Yield: 1 cake