Banana Coconut Cream Cake

If my two favourite desserts (Banana Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting and Coconut Cream Pie) were to hook-up, this cake would be their lovechild.

You can bake this in three 6-inch or 8-inch pans. If you use the 6-inch pans, you will get a tall majestic cake. The 8-inch pans produce a shorter, but no less delicious cake.

Serves 8

Coconut Cream Filling
3 large egg yolks
2 Tablespoons cornstarch
2 teaspoons granulated sugar
7 ounces canned coconut milk (do not use light). You will have leftover from the can. You can freeze it for another day.
½ cup whole milk
¼ cup unsweetened shredded coconut
¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
1 Tablespoon unsalted butter
½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract

Cake
1½ cups all-purpose flour
1½ teaspoons baking powder
¾ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¾ cup unsalted butter, removed from fridge 30 minutes before baking
¾ cup sugar
6 Tablespoons sour cream (not light or fat free)
2 teaspoons vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
3 eggs
¾ cup whole milk
3 ripe bananas, peeled and mashed

Frosting
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
8-ounce brick of cream cheese (do not use light)
2 cups icing sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon kosher salt

To decorate cake:
½ cup unsweetened coconut flakes, toasted

1. **Make coconut cream filling:** In a medium sized mixing bowl, whisk together egg yolks, cornstarch and 2 teaspoons sugar. Set aside.

2. In a medium sized saucepan, bring coconut milk, whole milk, shredded coconut, ¼ cup sugar and salt to a simmer, stirring occasionally to ensure sugar is dissolved.

3. Using a ladle, pour about 1 cup of hot milk mixture over egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly, to ensure you don't scramble the eggs. Add remaining milk mixture to yolk mixture, in 3 additions, whisking constantly.

4. Pour mixture back into saucepan and cook until thickened and mixture reaches a boil, whisking constantly. This will only take about 1 minute. You won't really be able to tell if it has reached a boil while you are whisking, so after about a minute, stop whisking. If large bubbles burst quickly on the surface of your custard, it is ready.

5. Remove pot from heat. Whisk in butter and vanilla. Pour into a small bowl and cover surface directly with plastic wrap. Chill until firm, at least 3 hours. You can do this a day before serving cake if desired.

6. **Make cake:** Butter and flour three round 6-inch or 8-inch baking pans. Preheat oven to 350°F.

7. In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

8. In the bowl of a stand mixer, fitted with paddle attachment, cream butter and sugar for 4-5 minutes. Scrape down sides of bowl. Add sour cream and vanilla; beat until combined. Beat in egg, then milk. Scrape down sides of bowl again. Add mashed banana to bowl and mix to combine. Add flour mixture and mix on low speed, just until the flour is incorporated. Remove bowl from mixer and scrape down sides again just to ensure everything is well mixed.

9. Pour batter into buttered and floured pans, trying to make sure each pan has an equal amount. If you are anal like me, you will weigh the pans to make sure. Smooth top of batter and bake for 18-20 minutes for 8-inch pans or 28-30 minutes for 6-inch pans. Use a wooden skewer to test cake doneness. If the skewer comes out dry, cakes are ready. Remove pan to a rack to cool.

10. **Make frosting:** In the bowl of a stand mixer, fitted with paddle attachment, cream butter on high speed for about 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low and add cream cheese. Continue beating for another 2 minutes, on medium speed. Add icing sugar in 4 parts, beating to combine after each addition. Add vanilla and salt. Increase speed to high and beat until fluffy, about 3 minutes.

11. **Assemble cake:** Transfer coconut custard and frosting into disposable pastry bags to make assembling the cake easier. Cut the end off the pastry bags so that you have a hole about 1-inch in diameter. Put a dab of frosting in the center of a serving plate. This will act as glue so your cake won't slide around when you frost it.

12. Lay one layer of cake over the dab of frosting. Pipe a boarder of cream cheese frosting around the edge of the first layer. Pipe half the coconut cream filling in the center of the layer and use an offset spatula to smooth it out,

13. Top with a second cake layer and repeat cream cheese border and coconut cream filling in the center.

14. Top with final cake layer. Pipe remainder of cream cheese frosting on top and sides of cake. Using a bench scraper or offset spatula, smooth out icing.

15. Decorate top of cake with unsweetened toasted coconut flakes.

16. Refrigerate cake until serving time. Leftover cake will keep in fridge for about 3 days.