

*Oven Temperature: 350°F.
Baking Time: 25 to 35 Minutes*

***French Génoise
(JenWAHZ)***

Serves: 8

INGREDIENTS	MEASURE	WEIGHT	
		ounces	grams
<i>room temperature</i>	<i>volume</i>		
clarified beurre noisette *	3 tablespoons	1.25 ounces	37 grams
vanilla	1 teaspoon	•	4 grams
4 large eggs	6 full fluid ounces	7 ounces	200 grams (out of the shell)
sugar	1/2 cup	3.5 ounces	100 grams
sifted cake flour	1/2 cup	1.75 ounces	50 grams
cornstarch, lightly spooned	1/2 cup – 1 tablespoon	1.75 ounces	50 grams
<i>3/4 Cup Syrup:</i>	•	<i>7 ounces</i>	<i>200 grams</i>
sugar	1/4 cup + 1 1/2 teaspoons	2 ounces	56 grams
water	1/2 liquid cup	4 ounces	118 grams
liqueur of your choice	2 tablespoons	1 ounce	28 grams

** If you do not have clarified butter on hand, you will need to clarify 2 tablespoons (1 ounce/25 grams) unsalted butter. In a heavy saucepan melt the butter over medium heat, partially covered to prevent splattering. When the butter looks clear, cook uncovered, watching carefully until the solids drop and begin to brown. Pour immediately through a fine strainer or a strainer lined with cheesecloth.*

Equipment: One 9-inch by 2-inch pan or 9-inch springform pan or 9-inch by 2-inch heart-shaped pan or 8-inch by 2-inch square pan, greased, bottom lined with parchment, and then sprayed with Baker’s Joy or greased again and floured.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Warm the beurre noisette until almost hot (110°F. to 120°F.). Add the vanilla and keep warm.

In a large mixing bowl set over a pan of simmering water heat the eggs and sugar until just lukewarm, stirring constantly to prevent curdling. (The eggs may also be heated by placing them still in their shells in a large mixing bowl in an oven with a pilot light for 3 hours or up to overnight. The weight of the unshelled eggs should be 8 ounces.) Using the whisk beater, beat the mixture on high speed for 5 minutes or until triple in volume. (A hand beater may be used but it will be necessary to beat for at least 10 minutes.)

While the eggs are beating, sift together the flour and cornstarch.

Remove 1 scant cup of the egg mixture and thoroughly whisk it into the *beurre noisette*.

Sift 1/2 the flour mixture over the remaining egg mixture and fold it in gently but rapidly with a large balloon whisk, slotted skimmer, or rubber spatula until almost all the flour has disappeared. Repeat with the remaining flour mixture until the flour has disappeared completely. Fold in the butter mixture until just incorporated.

Pour immediately into the prepared pan (it will be about 2/3 full) and bake 25 to 35 minutes or until the cake is golden brown and starts to shrink slightly from the sides of the pan. (No need for a cake tester. Once the sides shrink the cake is done.) Avoid opening the oven door before the minimum time or the cake could fall. Test toward the end of baking by opening the door slightly and, if at a quick glance it does not appear done, close door at once and check again in 5 minutes.

Loosen the sides of the cake with a small metal spatula and unmold at once onto a lightly greased rack. Reinvert to cool. Trim the bottom and top crust when ready to complete the cake and sprinkle the syrup evenly on both sides. After being sprinkled with syrup, *génoise* becomes fragile and more prone to splitting when moved. Use a cardboard round or a removable pan bottom for support.

To Make Syrup

In a small saucepan with a tight-fitting lid bring the sugar and water to a rolling boil, stirring constantly. Cover immediately, remove from the heat, and allow to cool completely. Transfer to a liquid measuring cup and stir in the liqueur. If the syrup has slightly evaporated, add enough water to equal 3/4 cup syrup.

Understanding

It is fascinating to compare *génoise* to basic butter cake. For the same size cake, the *génoise* uses double the egg, half the sugar, flour/cornstarch, and butter, and no chemical leavening or added liquid. This explains why the *génoise* is "lighter than air!" With the addition of syrup, however, the sugar level is almost as high as in the butter cake.

I once spent an entire week playing with *génoise* variations, proportions, and techniques. I discovered by accidentally burning the butter that brown butter (*beurre noisette*) transforms the flavor of a *génoise*, adding richness and dimension. (This was published in *Cook's* magazine, May/June 1981.) Butter is warmed before folding into the batter so that it stays liquid and does not weigh down the batter.

Replacing some of the flour with cornstarch (a European technique) tightens the grain and holds the moisture supplied by the eggs and sugar. Although using part cake flour produces the best texture, other flours will work, even flours that are all starch such as potato flour (although the higher the starch content, the lower the *génoise*). I have

demonstrated this cake in England, France, and even Japan with "native" flours and always with success.

Variation

Rich Génoise : For a more buttery génoise that is denser and moister, use 1/3 cup (2.5 ounces/71 grams) beurre noisette. This génoise will require only half the syrup for moisture and flavor so it will be richer but less sweet!

Finished Height: After trimming bottom and top crusts: 1 1/2 inches.

Store: Syrup: 1 month refrigerated in an airtight container. Génoise: Without syrup, 2 days room temperature, 5 days refrigerated, 2 months frozen. After adding the syrup the flavors ripen and the moisture is more evenly distributed 1 day later. The completed cake can be refrigerated up to 5 days and frozen up to 2 months.

Complementary Adornments: One recipe: Any butter cream, whipped cream, glaze, or fondant.

Serve: Room temperature or lightly chilled.

Pointers for Success

? A large balloon whisk or a slotted skimmer is ideal for folding in the flour with the least amount of air loss. If using the whisk, periodically shake out the batter which collects on the inside.