

# Blood Orange Polenta Cake with Orange Syrup

## A few notes:

- You can use polenta or corn meal interchangeably. Polenta makes it sound like a fancier cake, but TBH, I used corn meal for most of my testing, because the polenta I had on hand was grittier than some of my tasters enjoyed. Do not use instant polenta!
- I used last-of-the-season blood oranges. I like their blend of bitter and sweet and also, obviously, their lurid color, which really makes the cake glaze really sumpin'. Feel free to use any manner of orange.
- The orange extract is a nice-to-have, but not necessary. It's a way to ensure the orange flavor comes through (cuz not all oranges are created alike).

**Makes 1 9-inch round cake.**

## What You'll Need:

8 ounces (250 grams) unsalted butter, softened

1 1/4 cups (250 grams) granulated sugar

Zest of 2 blood oranges

4 large eggs

1 scant cup (about 1 cup minus 2 tablespoons aka 140 grams) polenta or corn meal (see note above)

1 3/4 cups (200 grams) all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup blood orange juice

For the syrup:

1/2 cup (100 grams) granulated sugar

1/4 cup blood orange juice

Zest of 1 lemon

3 tablespoons lemon juice

What You'll Do:

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Grease a 9-inch round x 2-inches high cake pan. Line the bottom with a circle of parchment paper.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the polenta or corn meal, flour, baking powder and salt.
3. With a stand or hand mixer, beat the butter, sugar and orange zest until light and fluffy, remembering to scrape down the sides once or twice.
4. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing thoroughly with each addition. You can probably guess what I'll say about scraping down the sides, too, right?
5. Add the orange juice and dry ingredients (and the extract if using) and beat on low speed until just blended. Scrape down those pesky sides, then raise the speed to medium and beat until creamy, about one minute.
6. Spread the batter evenly in the pan and bake for 50 to 60 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean. So many variables go into the timing of when a cake is done, from your oven temperature to the color of your cake pan, that you should use my timing as guide. Let the cake cool on a rack for ten minutes, then invert, remove the paper and then turn the cake right side up.
7. While the cake is baking, make the syrup. In a small saucepan, stir together the sugar, juices and zest and cook slowly over low heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved. Continue to cook for about 5 minutes longer, until the mixture has thickened slightly. It should be a runny syrup, not slow like maple syrup.
8. While the cake is still warm, evenly brush the glaze over the cake. While this cake definitely develops more flavor over time, if you insisted on serving this warm, with whipped cream and some strawberries macerated in Grand Marnier, why I think you would still be quite pleased.