

Southern Sympathy Sweet Tea Bread

Courtesy of Perre Coleman Magness/Countryman Press

Ingredients:

1 family-sized tea bag
2 sprigs mint, plus 1 tablespoon finely chopped mint
8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup granulated sugar
the zest of one medium lemon
2 eggs
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup confectioners' sugar

Instructions:

Put the tea bag and 2 sprigs of mint in a measuring cup. Add 1 cup boiling water. Steep for 30 minutes; then remove the tea bag and mint. Cool to room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan with baking spray.

Beat the butter and sugar together in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment until light and fluffy. Beat in the lemon zest and 1 tablespoon of finely chopped fresh mint. Add the eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition and scraping down the sides of the bowl.

Measure out 1/2 cup of the tea, reserving the rest for the glaze. Add the flour, the baking powder, and the salt to the butter in the bowl in three additions, alternating with the tea and scraping down the sides of the bowl. When everything is well combined, beat on high for 5 seconds; then scrape the batter into the prepared pan and smooth it into an even layer.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes; then remove to a wire rack to cool completely. Meanwhile, prepare the glaze.

Sift the confectioners' sugar into a small bowl. Whisk in the remaining tea slowly until you have a pourable glaze about the consistency of heavy cream. Drizzle the glaze over the cake with a spoon, spreading to cover the top with a few attractive drips down the sides. Let the glaze set for about an hour.

The loaf will keep in an airtight container for a day. Makes one loaf.