

# JULY

## Baking School In-Depth: Bublanina

This Czech sponge cake, which has a similar texture to coffee cake and is reminiscent of a French clafoutis, is pleasing to the eye and even more pleasing to the palate with its light, airy batter gently kissed with hints of lemon and vanilla. In keeping with tradition, it's dappled with the best summertime has to offer—gleaming dark cherries, juicy blackberries, and tart raspberries, which nestle gently into the tender cake as it bakes. It gets its name from the Czech word for “bubble,” referring to the way the batter rises up and gently envelops the fruit. A dusting of confectioners' sugar is the final touch to this delicately understated and always delectable Bublanina.



# INGREDIENT BREAKDOWN

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Excellent recipes require wonderful ingredients. Here's how our recipe's ingredients contribute to making the very best Bublanina.

**UNBLEACHED CAKE FLOUR:** Unbleached cake flour makes a more tender cake than all-purpose flour because cake flour is made from soft wheat. With a 5% to 8% protein content, unbleached cake flour provides an ideal amount of protein, giving our Bublanina the perfect structure.

**BAKING POWDER:** Most baking powders are double-acting, meaning the reaction occurs twice, using two different acids. The first is a quick reaction when baking powder is combined with a liquid in the batter. The second reaction is slower, occurring when the cake bakes.

**KOSHER SALT:** Kosher salt has a pure, clean flavor because it doesn't contain iodine or minerals. It is flaked rather than granulated, allowing for more even distribution when whipped into the cake batter.

**EGGS:** Eggs aid in leavening the cake, contribute richness with their yolks, and add moisture to the sponge cake.

**CREAM OF TARTAR:** Adding a small amount of cream of tartar helps speed up the formation of air bubbles when whipping the egg whites. It also aids in stabilizing the whipped egg whites in the batter and helps them hold their volume.

**GRANULATED SUGAR:** Granulated sugar does more than add sweetness to the cake. Sugar acts as a whipping aide when stabilizing the egg whites. It also incorporates air into the batter as it's creamed with the butter. Sugar has hygroscopic properties, meaning it can absorb water from the surrounding environment. Because of this, the Bublanina will retain moisture even after being baked and cooled, leading to a longer shelf life.

**UNSALTED BUTTER:** Because butter is vital to the texture and richness of the cake, a European-style butter with a higher fat content than generic grocery store butter will yield the best results. Since the salt content can vary across butter brands, we use unsalted butter to control the exact amount of salt desired.

**VANILLA EXTRACT:** Vanilla extract is a magical ingredient that adds instant depth of flavor and complexity to this cake.

**LEMON ZEST:** A touch of lemon zest boosts the cake's flavor delicately yet distinctively.

**FRESH FRUIT:** Cherries are traditional in Bublanina, but any stone fruit or combination of berries work for this cake.





# TOOLS OF THE TRADE

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We recommend this set of tools for our technique



**STAND MIXER:** As a precious energy- and time-saver, a stand mixer will help whisk egg whites with the cream of tartar into foamy submission and effortlessly beat together the butter and sugar for the cake batter. (Pictured is the [KitchenAid® Artisan Design Series Blossom Stand Mixer](#).)

**ROUND CAKE PAN:** Designed to bake evenly, this beautiful, golden commercial-quality pan is crafted of aluminized steel for exceptional durability, making the pan ideal for baking the Bublanina. (Pictured is the [Williams Sonoma Goldtouch® Pro Nonstick Round Cake Pan, 9"](#).)

**SIEVE:** We love this heavy-duty stainless steel sieve. It's fitted with ergonomically shaped handles that make it comfortable to lift and hold when sifting dry ingredients and dusting the cake with a heavenly sprinkling of confectioners' sugar. (Pictured is the [All-Clad 3-Piece Stainless-Steel Strainer Set](#).)

# TOOLS OF THE TRADE

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**CHERRY PITTER:** Cherry-pitting is incredibly painless with this time-saving tool. The splatter guard keeps you and your kitchen from getting sprayed with juices as you pit an entire bowl of cherries with grace and ease. (Pictured is the [OXO Cherry & Olive Pitter](#).)

**OFFSET SPATULA:** A small offset spatula gives you optimal control when spreading the batter evenly into the cake pan. (Pictured is the [Williams Sonoma Olivewood Offset Icing Spatula, 4"](#).)

**GRATER:** This rasp grater is ideal for zesting lemon, with its razor-sharp stainless steel teeth that allow for grating in both directions, which saves time and energy. (Pictured is the [Microplane® Rasp Grater](#).)

**GLASS BOWLS AND SPATULAS:** You can't beat the basics for all your baking needs. Glass bowls are the perfect vessels for measuring, prepping, and mixing all your ingredients. Spatulas are perfect for stirring and folding the batter effortlessly. (Pictured are the [Glass Mixing Bowl 10-Piece Set](#) and [Williams Sonoma Ultimate Silicone Spatula Set with Stainless-Steel Handle](#).)

A close-up photograph of a slice of Bublanina cake. The slice is triangular and sits on a white ceramic plate. It is topped with fresh raspberries and blueberries, and dusted with powdered sugar. A silver fork is placed on the plate next to the slice. In the background, a larger round cake is visible on a white surface, along with a white cup filled with dark coffee. A small white bowl containing more berries is also in the background. The scene is set on a light-colored, possibly marble, surface.

BUBLANINA



## BUBLANINA

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

*Bublanina is a Czech sponge cake studded with fresh, juicy summertime jewels like raspberries, blackberries, and cherries that become swathed in a fluffy, soft cake perfect for serving alongside coffee in the morning or afternoon and just as lovely served at the end of any summer feast!*

- 1 cup (125 grams) unbleached cake flour
- ½ teaspoon (2.5 grams) baking powder
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
- 3 large eggs (150 grams), separated and room temperature
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar, divided
- ⅓ cup (75 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- 2 teaspoons (6 grams) lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon (6 grams) vanilla extract
- ½ cups assorted fresh berries or ½-inch-chopped stone fruit (see Note)

Garnish: confectioners' sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray a 9-inch round cake pan with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites and cream of tartar at medium-high speed until foamy. Reduce mixer speed to medium-low, and add ¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar in a slow, steady stream. Increase mixer speed to medium-high, and beat until medium-stiff peaks form. Transfer to a medium bowl.
4. Clean bowl of stand mixer. Using the paddle attachment, beat butter and remaining ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping

to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating until combined after each addition; scrape sides of bowl. Beat at medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Beat in lemon zest and vanilla.

5. Add egg white mixture to butter mixture in three additions alternately with flour mixture, beginning and ending with egg white mixture, folding by hand until just combined after each addition. Gently spread batter into prepared pan. Place fruit on batter. (Do not press fruit into batter.)

6. Bake until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and serve warm or at room temperature. Just before serving, garnish with confectioners' sugar, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**Note:** For this cake, focus on the volume of the fruit rather than the weight. Pit and halve cherries before measuring.



# TIME TO SIFT

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Sifting breaks up lumps in the flour and aerates the remaining dry ingredients, making it easier to mix into the batter



**1. In a medium bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Sifting ensures all the dry ingredients will evenly distribute in the batter.**

# PERFECT PEAKS

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Whipped egg whites bolstered by cream of tartar help give the cake its beautiful height and delightful texture



1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites and cream of tartar at medium-high speed until foamy. Reduce mixer speed to medium-low, and add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (50 grams) granulated sugar in a slow, steady stream. Increase mixer speed to medium-high, and beat until medium-stiff peaks form. Transfer to a medium bowl. Granulated sugar and cream of tartar aid in the stabilization of the egg whites, but make sure you add the sugar in a slow, steady stream; this ensures that the sugar will dissolve into the egg whites instead of giving the mixture a grainy texture. Also, you don't want to deflate all the lovely air you whipped into the egg whites, which gives the cake a lovely light texture.



# BEATING THE BATTER

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Dreamily creamed butter and sugar and gloriously golden yolks give the cake texture and wonderful flavor



**1. Clean bowl of stand mixer. Using the paddle attachment, beat butter and remaining 1/2 cup (100 grams) granulated sugar at medium speed until fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating until combined after each addition; scrape sides of bowl. Beat at medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Beat in lemon zest and vanilla. Make sure your butter is softened correctly for this step, not too cold or warm. Softened butter should have some resistance when you gently press it, but it should still keep its shape. As the butter and sugar are beaten together, the mixture aerates or creates lots of tiny bubbles, contributing to the cake's volume. The more bubbles you have in your network, the lighter in texture your cake will be and the finer the crumb. Don't skip the step where you scrape the sides of the mixing bowl. It ensures that the butter, sugar, and eggs blend cohesively, resulting in a homogenized batter.**

# EASY DOES IT

Now that we've incorporated air into the butter mixture and the egg whites, it's time to fold everything together gently and adorn the batter with jewel-toned summer fruit



1. Add egg white mixture in three additions alternately with flour mixture, beginning and ending with egg white mixture, folding by hand until just combined after each addition. Gently spread batter into prepared pan. Place fruit on batter. (Do not press fruit into batter.) Carefully folding the egg whites in at this step is key to a beautiful, airy cake. Although cherries are a traditional choice, any combination of berries or stone fruit would be fantastic dotted on the top of this Bublanina.