EASY SPONGE CAKE

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 Large Eggs, separated
- 1½ Cups All-purpose Flour
- ½ Tsp. Salt
- 1½ Cups Sugar, divided
- ½ Cup Warm Water (from the tap)
- 1 Tsp. Vanilla Extract
- Zest of 1 Orange (about a tablespoon)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat your oven to 325°. Let the eggs stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

2. Sift the flour and salt together. Set aside.

3. Separate the eggs. Use a small bowl to separate the individual eggs. This way, if you mess one up, you won't contaminate all of the whites. It is imperative that your egg whites have no yolk at all or they won't whip enough to give the cake leavening.

4. In a large bowl, beat the egg yolks with a whisk until slightly thickened (2-3 minutes). Gradually add 1 cup of the sugar, beating until thick and lemon colored. Blend in orange zest, water and vanilla. Add the dry ingredients to the yolk mixture and mix until well incorporated.

5. In another bowl, beat the egg whites until soft peaks form (it's best to use a stand or hand held electric mixer for this). Gradually beat in the remaining half cup of sugar, about a tablespoon at a time, on high until stiff glossy peaks form and all of the sugar is dissolved

6. Fold a fourth of the egg whites into the batter to losen it. Then fold in the remaining egg whites being careful not to "deflate" them.

7. Gently spoon the batter into an UNGREASED 10 inch TUBE PAN (not a bundt pan). Cut through the batter with a knife to remove any air bubbles.

8. Bake on the lowest oven rack in the pre-heated oven until the cake springs back when lightly touched...about 55-60 minutes. Immediately invert the pan (let gravity be your friend) and allow it to cool completely.

10. Run a long, slender bladed knife around the side and center tube of the pan and remove the outer sleeve of the pan. Run the knife between the bottom of the cake and the base of the pan and remove the cake to a serving platter.

11. Serve with ice cream, whipped cream, berries, or just as is. It's delicious any way. ENJOY!