

Beginnings of the Original Bled Cream Cake



In 1953, pastry chef **Ištvan Lukačević**, who moved to Bled with his family in the late 1940s from the town of Senta in the Serbian province of Vojvodina to take a job as the head of the pastry kitchen at the former Park Hotel facility, created the original recipe for what is now the famous traditional Bled cream cake. The base of Lukačević's invention was an old recipe from Vojvodina, which he changed by replacing half of the egg-based cream with whipped cream. In so doing, he produced an extraordinarily light and soft dessert which remains popular to this day.

First, Lukačević kneaded butter-based pastry dough which he folded seven times and left to rest until the next morning when he baked it and let it to cool. Next, he mixed up the best natural ingredients into a fine egg-based cream and left it to simmer for exactly seven minutes, stirring occasionally. Then he added firmly whipped egg whites to the hot cream and poured the yolks onto a thin layer of baked dough. Once the cream was completely cool he garnished it with a layer of whipped cream and covered it with another layer of the butter-based dough. He finished the dessert off with a generous layer of icing sugar and cut the cake into 60 pieces, each 7 x 7 cm.

After all these years, the **Park Cream Cake** retains exactly the same size and shape, and is still made using the original recipe.

Cream Cake Recipe Passed down to Younger Generations

Since Ištvan Lukačević, the pastry kitchen has mainly been run by women chefs. The former head of the Park pastry kitchen, Angela Zupan, who began her career in the pastry industry in 1967, held the position for 25 years. Thanks to this long-term status, she was nicknamed the Cream Cake Mom.

1953 - 1977	Ištvan Lukačević
1977 - 1981	Marija Zajc
1981 - 2006	Angela Zupan
2006 - 2008	Betka Sodja
2008 - present	Alma Rekič



Interesting Facts about Cream Cake

The pastry kitchen staff at Park Hotel use exclusively natural ingredients when preparing Bled cream cakes. These include eggs, flour, whipped cream, sugar and butter. The cream cakes do not contain artificial colours, preservatives or other additives, and must be made fresh every day.

The preparation of Bled cream cakes in Park Hotel starts at 5 am. The pastry is baked a day in advance so it is cold in the morning and has just the right crunchy texture.



In one day, the staff make several batches of cream cake, especially over the weekend when the numbers of visitors to Bled are at their highest. At the busiest times, they will make them every hour, so freshness is guaranteed.

The butter-based pastry dough is still kneaded by hand. The preparation of this dough takes 2 hours. In the process, the batch is folded several times, thus creating puff pastry.



The cream cake flour must be left to rest before being used in the cake, since this is the only way to ensure it is firm enough that the vanilla cream does not collapse.



The quality of the ingredients is extremely important to us. On several occasions, Park pastry chefs have made Bled cream cakes abroad using exactly the same ingredients they use at home; had they not, the cream cakes would have failed.

The oldest members of staff have, however, noticed that the quality of ingredients has changed over the years. For example, the cream used for whipping used to be much firmer than today and so they could use it in smaller quantities.

In preparing the cream cakes, the pastry chefs have to follow the recipe religiously by ensuring they carefully measure all the ingredients and cook the egg-based cream for the exact time required by the recipe. Beginner chefs often have problems preparing the cakes and not all of them are completely up to this task.



The senior pastry chefs, now mostly women, say they can never make the cakes as good as the hotel cakes when they try to make this dessert at home, despite many years of experience.

The Park Hotel pastry kitchen was refurbished in 2006. Thanks to the new ovens, the cream cakes are now prepared on smaller baking trays of 35 x 50 cm, so one tray yields 35 cream cakes.

Ten Million Sweet Treats



For all these years, the Park pastry kitchen staff have religiously been recording the baked sheets of dough which served as the basis for the preparation of the cream cakes. In the 56 years between 1953 and 2009, our pastry chefs have prepared almost 10 million original Bled cream cakes. The Kavarna Park Café is the place where the most cream cakes are sold and eaten on the spot. During the nice days of spring and on autumn weekends, the pastry kitchen prepares from 2,500 to 3,000 cakes. However, some chefs still remember winters in late 1970s, when they used to make up to 6,000 cream cakes over a single weekend. At that time, the Bled Lake regularly froze over the

winter and the idyllic landscape attracted masses of visitors.

Today, the cream cakes are served in all hotels, restaurants and cafés of the Sava Hotels Bled group, which means the number of Bled cream cakes made in the pastry kitchen is on the rise.



Ten million cream cakes statistically:

- Lined up, ten million cream cakes would make a queue long enough to reach Frankfurt from Bled.
- The ten million cream cakes would be enough to cover a third of the surface of Lake Bled.
- It takes 4,300,000 eggs to make ten million cream cakes.