Fresh Coconut Cake   (from the *San Franciso Chronicle*, sometime in 1988)

Cake	Boiled Frosting
1/2 cup butter, softened	1 1/2 cups sugar
1 1/2 cups sugar	1/2 cup water
1 teaspoon vanilla	1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
1/2 teaspoon coconut extract	pinch of salt
1 3/4 cups cake flour	1/2 cup egg whites (about 3 extra large)
2 teaspoons baking powder	2 teaspoons vanilla
1/4 teaspoon salt	
3/4 cup milk	
4 egg whites	
1 large coconut	

To prepare the coconut : the best way to open a fresh coconut is "ape style," by hurling it onto a hard surface, such as a rock, sidewalk or driveway -- don't do it in the house.   You lose the liquid inside, but it isn't too useful anyhow.   Keep at it until the coconut breaks into three or four pieces. Pry out the white meat with a table knife; then, using a vegetable peeler, pare off the dark skin.   Grate the coconut with the shredding disk of a food processor or through the large holes of a hand grater.   You will have 3 to 4 cups.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.   Grease and flour two 8-inch round cake pans.   Beat butter and 1 1/4 cups of the sugar together until well blended. Beat in the vanilla and coconut extract.   Sift together flour, baking powder and salt.   Add dry ingredients to the butter-sugar mixture alternately in two parts with the milk.   In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites until foamy, then continue beating as you gradually add the remaining 1/4 cup of sugar; beat until whites stand in soft peaks.   Fold about a quarter of the beaten whites and 1 cup of the coconut into the batter.   Scoop on the remaining whites and fold rapidly just until blended.

Divide the batter between the prepared pans and bake for about 23 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in a cake comes out clean.   Let cool in the pans for 5 minutes before turning out onto a rack to cool completely.

Prepare frosting : combine the sugar, water, cream of tartar and salt in a small saucepan over high heat.   Bring to a boil, swirling the pan occasionally, and boil until perfectly clear - about 5 minutes.   Put a lid on the pan for 1 minute, then remove the lid and continue boiling over high heat until the mixture registers 240 degrees.   While the syrup boils, beat the egg whites in a large bowl until they stand in stiff peaks.   Slowly pour the hot syrup into the egg whites, beating constantly at medium-high speed.   Add vanilla and continue beating for 2 to 3 more minutes, until the frosting stands in peaks and is stiff enough to spread.

Spread a thick layer of frosting between the layers and on the top and sides of the cooled cake.   Cover the cake all over with the remaining grated coconut, patting it on with your hands.

June 2004 notes :   Cake does not rise very much.   For a more impressive presentation, consider increasing batter by 50% and make a 3 layer cake (1 coconut and the frosting recipe should still be sufficient to cover the third layer).   If keeping to original recipe, do not be stingy with the frosting in the center.   The weight of the cake will squash the center a bit, so try for a good 3/4-inch layer of frosting between cake layers.   Also, consider sprinkling additional coconut over the layer of frosting before placing top layer of cake.

July 2008 notes: made cupcakes — doubled the cake recipe, and needed 2 coconuts, but just one batch of icing.   baked about 18 minutes. worked very well — simply iced the tops of the cupcakes and then dipped in the bowl of shredded coconut.