

EASY, BEST-EVER DARK CHOCOLATE CAKE

INGREDIENTS

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup granulated sugar*
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
1 cup hot chocolate
1 cup buttermilk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

*Note: I like to keep the sugar low for the kids, however, if you like the real deal, increase to $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 c. of sugar.

ORANGE-INFUSED MASCARPONE FROSTING

Peel of 1 orange
1 cup heavy cream
8 ounces mascarpone cheese, at room temperature
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' sugar, sifted (more or less, to taste)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Butter two 8-inch round cake pans (preferably springform for easy removal later) and dust with cocoa powder.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder and salt.
3. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients. Pour in eggs, hot chocolate, buttermilk, vegetable oil and vanilla extract. Whisk together until combined. Divide evenly between prepared cake pans.

Bake for 30-40 minutes until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack.

ORANGE-INFUSED MASCARPONE FROSTING

Infuse orange peel into cream (optional):

1. Place cream in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Add orange zest to the cream and simmer for 2-3 minutes, until the cream has taken on some orange flavor.
2. Take cream off the heat. Remove zest with a tongs or by straining the cream. Discard zest. Allow cream to cool a bit before placing in the refrigerator until completely chilled. (Note: The cream must be chilled before it can be whipped - step 3.)

Mascarpone Frosting:

3. With an electric mixer on medium speed, beat cream just until very soft peaks form. Watch the texture in the video, be careful not to over whip the cream.
4. In a second bowl, beat together mascarpone and confectioners' sugar until smooth and creamy. Fold cream into the mascarpone mixture until incorporated. Frost cake as desired.