

Salt and Serenity

Chocolate and Peanut Butter Mousse Cake

Adapted from Yvonne Ruperti's Peanut Butter Chocolate Cake featured on www.seriousseats.com.

For the Cake:

- 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 cups hot coffee
- 3 cups granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 14 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

For the Peanut Butter Mousse:

- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 3/4 cup (3 ounces) confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup cream peanut butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup heavy cream

For the Chocolate Coffee Buttercream:

- 2 teaspoons instant coffee or instant espresso powder
- 2 tablespoons boiling water
- 2 cups (1 pound) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 4 cups icing sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2-3 tablespoons milk

For Peanut Praline: (optional)

- 1 cup salted peanuts
- 1 1/3 cups granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup water

Reese's Pieces for decorating

1. **For the cake:** Adjust oven rack to middle position and preheat oven to 350°F. Grease three 9-inch round cake pans with unsalted butter and line bottoms with parchment paper.
2. Place chopped chocolate in a medium bowl. Pour hot coffee over chocolate. Stir and set aside.
3. In large bowl, whisk sugar, buttermilk, egg, yolk, oil, salt, and vanilla until combined.
4. In small bowl, whisk flour, cocoa, baking soda, and baking powder until combined. Whisk the dry ingredients into the wet until combined. Whisk in the coffee mixture until smooth.
5. Pour 1/3 batter into each pan. Bake until just firm, about 20 to 25 minutes. Let cake cool in pans for 15 minutes, and then invert cakes onto wire rack to cool completely before assembling cake.
6. **For the Peanut Butter Mousse:** In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat cream cheese with sugar, peanut butter, vanilla, and salt on medium speed until creamy and light, about 5 minutes. Transfer to large bowl. Switch to whip attachment and beat cream on high speed to stiff but not dry peaks. Fold cream into peanut butter mixture. Keep chilled until ready to use.
7. **For Buttercream:** Dissolve coffee in boiling water. Place all ingredients in bowl of the stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat on low speed for 1-2 minutes until the icing sugar is incorporated. Increase speed to medium high and beat until creamy, about 3 more minutes. Set aside.
8. **For Peanut Praline: (optional)** Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and put peanuts in a single layer in the center of the pan. Set aside.
9. In a small heavy saucepan, combine the sugar and water and bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly until the sugar is dissolved. Clip a candy thermometer onto the side of the pot. Increase heat to medium-high and boil until sugar begins to caramelize, and reaches 300°F. Immediately pour hot caramel over peanuts. Allow to harden and cool completely. Remove praline from baking sheet and break into smaller pieces. Grind in food processor until finely powdered. Set aside.
10. **Assemble Cake:** Place one layer of cake on serving platter. Cut 4 small strips of waxed paper and slide them under each side of the cake to keep platter clean while icing. Spread ½ of the peanut butter mousse onto the first layer. Cover with a second cake layer and spread the rest of the peanut butter mousse over the second layer. Cover with third cake layer.

11. Using an offset spatula, ice the sides of the cake with some of the buttercream. Cover the top of the cake with additional buttercream. If using peanut praline, dust sides of cake with praline dust.
12. Transfer leftover buttercream into a disposable piping bag fitted with a medium star tip. Pipe rosettes around edge of cake and top each with a Reese's piece candy.
13. Chill cake until serving. It will keep well in the fridge for at least 1-2 days.