

# Salt and Serenity

## Topsy Turvy Chocolate Birthday Cake

The cake recipe is adapted from "Pleasures of Your Food Processor" by Noreen Gilletz. The buttercream recipe comes from Nila at [www.thetoughcookie.com](http://www.thetoughcookie.com)

You will need two 8 inch round cake pans, two 6 inch round cake pans and two 4 inch round cake pans. **Make the cake recipe twice, do not try to double the recipe and make it once! Your food processor will overflow and make a terrible mess. (Not that I would ever do anything that foolish!)** You will also need 3 round cardboard or foil cake circles (one 8 inch, one 6 inch and one 4 inch).

### **Cake (make this twice)**

$\frac{2}{3}$  cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
2  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups all-purpose flour  
2 cups sugar  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons baking powder  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons baking soda  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoons salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup strong coffee  
1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups whole milk  
3 eggs  
1  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups vegetable oil

### **Dark Chocolate Buttercream**

260g (or 1 cup + 3 Tablespoons) unsalted butter, cubed and softened at room temperature (30 minutes out of the fridge is perfect)  
500g (or 4 cups) powdered sugar  
140g (or 1 cup + 3 tablespoons) Dutch-processed cocoa powder  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
160ml (or  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup) heavy whipping cream  
pinch of salt

1. **Make cakes:** Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter and flour two 8-inch round baking pans, two 6-inch round cake pans and two 4-inch round cake pans and set aside.
2. Combine all the dry ingredients for the cake in the food processor bowl and process with the steel knife until well blended, about 10 seconds. Add milk and eggs. Start processor and pour oil through the top while the machine is running. Process batter for about 45 seconds.

3. Pour batter into one 8-inch, one 6-inch and one 4-inch prepared pan, filling each pan about  $\frac{1}{3}$  full. Bake the layers for about 25–35 minutes, until a wooden skewer inserted into cake comes out with only a few crumbs of cake attached. Cool on a rack for about 20 minutes before removing cake from pans. Let cakes cool completely before icing.
4. Rinse the food processor bowl and make the cake batter a second time. Pour batter into the second set of 8-inch, 6-inch and 4-inch prepared pans, filling each pan about  $\frac{1}{3}$  full. Bake the layers for about 25–35 minutes, until a wooden skewer inserted into cake comes out with only a few crumbs of cake attached. Cool on a rack for about 20 minutes before removing cake from pans. Let cakes cool completely before icing.
5. **Make buttercream:** In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat softened butter with the whisk attachment until smooth and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Using a rubber spatula, scrape the sides of the bowl, and then beat for another 30 seconds.
6. Add powdered sugar and cocoa powder. Combine vanilla, cream and salt and add it to the bowl with the butter. Using a rubber spatula or a wooden spoon, stir ingredients until somewhat incorporated and the mixture looks dry and crumbly, but not powdery. This is just so that you don't end up with a big cloud of powdered sugar and cocoa in your kitchen when you turn the mixer on.
7. Mix for 3-5 minutes, or until the buttercream looks creamy, fluffy and smooth.
8. **Frost and assemble cake:** Set 8-inch round cardboard or foil cake circle on a flat plate. Place one 8-inch cake on cardboard circle. Cut 4 small strips of waxed paper and slide them under each side of the cake to keep platter clean while icing. Spread about  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of the icing onto the top of the first layer. Cover with the second 8-inch cake and proceed to ice the sides and then top of the cake. Remove waxed paper strips and refrigerate while you frost 6-inch and 4-inch layers.
9. Set 6-inch round cardboard or foil cake circle on a flat plate. Place one 6-inch cake on cardboard circle. Cut 4 small strips of waxed paper and slide them under each side of the cake to keep platter clean while icing. Spread about  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of the icing onto the top of the first layer. Cover with the second 6-inch cake and proceed to ice the sides and then top of the cake. Remove waxed paper strips and refrigerate while you frost the 4-inch layers.

10. Set 4 inch round cardboard or foil cake circle on a flat plate. Place one 4-inch cake on cardboard circle. Cut 4 small strips of waxed paper and slide them under each side of the cake to keep platter clean while icing. Spread about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the icing onto the top of the first layer. Cover with the second 4-inch cake and proceed to ice the sides and then top of the cake. Remove waxed paper strips and refrigerate for about 30 minutes.
11. Set frosted 8-inch cake on decorative cake stand. Gently set 6-inch cake on top of the 8-inch cake and then top the 6 inch cake with the 4 inch cake. I set each layer slightly off center to give the cake a Topsy Turvy impression.
12. Fit a disposable piping bag with a medium star tip. Fill bag with remaining chocolate buttercream. Pipe a decorative boarder at top and bottom of each layer.
13. Light candles and celebrate!