

Chocolate Espresso & Vanilla Hazelnut Surprise Cake with Chocolate Espresso Glaze



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Makes 1 loaf cake

Prep time: 1h + cooling and chilling time

Cook time: 1h 30min

Total time: 2h 30min

Difficulty: Intermediate

Category: Cakes

This simple cake with an element of surprise is perfect for the holidays and all sorts of special occasions. The cake itself is moist and delicious, and the chocolate espresso glaze makes it even more special and festive. To make this surprise cake, you basically need to make two separate cakes. Once the first cake is baked and cooled, you slice it and cut desired shapes from it. These cut-outs are then neatly arranged in a loaf pan, covered with another cake batter and baked within the second cake. It's that simple. The leftovers from the cut cake can be used to make cake pops, or you could just eat them the way they are. They're great with a cup of coffee.

For the chocolate espresso pound cake:

Ingredients

180g butter, at room temperature

180g sugar

3 eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

4 tbsp brewed espresso (or instant coffee)

180g all-purpose flour

1/8 tsp salt

1tsp baking powder

45g cocoa powder

Directions

Preheat your oven to 180°C. Butter a 20x9x7cm (3 cup) loaf pan and line it with a long strip of parchment paper.

In the bowl of your standing mixer, cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing on medium speed until well incorporated. Mix in vanilla extract and cold espresso coffee. In a separate bowl, combine flour, salt, baking powder and cocoa powder. Sift the dry ingredients into the batter and fold them in gently with a wooden spoon or a rubber spatula. The batter will be quite thick.

Spoon the batter into the prepared loaf pan and bake for 45-50 minutes (a wooden skewer should come out clean). Let the cake cool in a pan for 10 minutes and then turn it out on a wire rack to cool completely.

Once cold, cut the cake into 1cm thick slices. Using a cookie cutter, cut a star from each slice. Line the stars on a large plate and cover them with plastic wrap. Freeze the stars for 30 minutes before using them in the next step. Time your steps carefully. If the stars are left in the freezer too long, they will be too cold

and the yellow cake batter around the stars might stay raw.

For the vanilla hazelnut loaf cake:

Ingredients

125g butter, at room temperature
170g sugar
3 eggs
1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
170g all-purpose flour
60g toasted ground hazelnuts
1 1/2 tsp baking powder
1 1/2 tsp salt
160ml buttermilk

Directions

Preheat your oven to 180°C. Butter a 20x9x7cm (3 cup) loaf pan and line it with a long strip of parchment paper.

In the bowl of your standing mixer, cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing on medium speed until well incorporated. Mix in vanilla extract. In a separate bowl, combine flour, ground hazelnuts, baking powder and salt. Beat the flour mixture into the batter in three additions, alternating it with buttermilk. Finish with the flour mixture.

Spoon just enough batter into the pan to cover the bottom. Neatly line the stars into the bottom one after another in a tightly packed row, making sure they're all standing exactly the same way. Also, make sure there are no gaps between them. Spoon over the remaining cake batter, covering as much of the stars as possible. Bake for 45-50 minutes (a wooden skewer should come out clean and dry). Let the cake cool in a pan for 20 minutes and then turn it out on a wire rack to cool completely before glazing it.

For the chocolate espresso ganache glaze:

Ingredients

100g chopped dark chocolate
1 tsp butter
130ml heavy cream
1 tsp espresso powder (or instant coffee powder)
1/8 tsp ground cinnamon

Directions

Place the chopped chocolate and butter in a heat resistant bowl and set aside. Combine the cream, espresso powder and ground cinnamon and bring the mixture just to a boil. Pour it over chocolate pieces and let this sit for a few minutes, until the chocolate starts to melt. Gently stir the cream and the chocolate together until combined. Pour the ganache over the loaf cake and spread it all over the top and sides. Let it set for 15-20 minutes before serving.