

THE Chocolate Cake

Cake

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups sugar
4 ounces unsweetened chocolate
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature, cut into 3 pieces
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 eggs, lightly beaten

Frosting

1 1/3 cups heavy cream
1 1/2 cups sugar
6 ounces unsweetened chocolate
1 stick (4 ounces) plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
Pinch of salt

Preheat the oven to 350°. Butter and flour two 8-by-1 1/2-inch round cake pans (or using Pam for Baking spray). Line the bottoms with wax paper.

In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; set aside.

Put the 4 oz. of chocolate and butter in a large, heatproof bowl. In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar with 2 cups of water. Bring to a boil over high heat and stir until the sugar dissolves; then pour into the bowl with the chocolate and butter. Let sit, stirring occasionally, until melted and slightly cooled (about 5 minutes). Then, stir in the vanilla.

Beat the eggs into the chocolate mixture at medium speed until combined. Add the dry ingredients all at once and beat at medium speed until smooth. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared pans and bake for about 25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool the cakes in their pans for about 25 minutes, then invert onto a plate or cake stand to cool completely.

While the cakes cool, make the frosting:

In a medium saucepan, bring the cream and sugar to a boil over moderately high heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the liquid reduces slightly, 6–8 minutes. Put the chocolate, butter, vanilla, and salt in a large bowl. Slowly pour in the cream and sugar mixture. Let stand, stirring occasionally, until the chocolate and butter are melted (about 5 minutes).

Set the bowl in a larger bowl of ice water (more ice than water; be careful not to let the water spill into the frosting). Using a hand-held electric mixer, beat the frosting on medium

speed, scraping the sides occasionally with a rubber spatula, until thick and glossy, about 10 minutes. Use at once.

Place one of the cake rounds on a cake platter and cover with 1/3 of frosting. Place second cake on top and continue frosting from the top of the cake and down around the sides. Garnish with chocolate shavings if desired.



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