

THE SACRAMENTO BEE



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Invisible Chef materializes in the kitchen to aid a novice baker

HIGHLIGHTS

Boutique bakery uses all-natural ingredients



Invisible Chef's Cherry-Chocolate Chip cake is foolproof. **Allen Pierleoni** - apierleoni@sacbee.com



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Julia Child said it: "A party without cake is just a meeting."



With those words as inspiration, I broke out the box of Cherry Chocolate Chip ("Infused with a hint of Amaretto") coffee/tea cake from [Invisible Chef](http://www.theinvisiblechef.com) and began the step-by-step of baking my first cake without guidance. Duh. How hard could it be, barring a kitchen fire or oven explosion? As it turned out, the process was a figurative piece of cake.



Invisible Chef was founded 10 years ago by longtime friends Terry Howard and Jill McCauley, who parlayed modified family recipes (and a few from their favorite B&Bs) into the concept of using natural ingredients to make small batches of product in a boutique factory in Kentucky. The result is a line of mixes for cakes, breads, scones, muffins, brownies, cupcakes, pancakes, waffles and more (\$5 to \$15). Find them at www.theinvisiblechef.com and at brick-and-mortar stores including Macy's, Cost Plus World Market, Home Goods, T.J. Maxx, Marshalls and Yankee Candle.



Back in the kitchen, I poured the cake mix into a bowl, added two eggs, milk and vegetable oil, and stirred "until just moistened." Should I add some butter-sauteed pecans or more dried cherries? What about some Meyer's lemon juice? Nah, keep it pure.

Later, after the cake had cooled, we cut into it. Hey, really good, but better after a night in the refrigerator. Would we buy the product again? Yes, and make the above-mentioned additions for the experiment of it.

Now, about Invisible Chef's mixes for beer bread and lemon-blueberry waffles ...

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