

FRENCH CHOCOLATE BÛCHE DE NOËL CAKE

(YULE LOG CAKE)

Harney Destinations: Paris



Ingredients:

For the Sponge Cake:

4 large eggs, room temperature

⅓ C sugar

1 tsp pure vanilla extract

¼ tsp salt

1 C cake flour

For the Chocolate Buttercream:

7 large egg whites

1 ⅓ C granulated sugar

6 oz. unsweetened chocolate, melted and cooled

½ tsp instant espresso powder

½ tsp pure vanilla extract

1 ½ C unsalted butter, softened

Confectioners' sugar, and/or cocoa powder, optional

Assembly:

1. Unroll the cake and set aside the towel.

2. Evenly spread 2 cups (or your desired amount) of the chocolate buttercream on the inside of the cake, spreading in the direction of its natural curve, leaving a 1-inch border around the edges.

3. Gently roll it back into a log.

4. Trim the rough ends of the roll. Then cut off about ¼ of one end of the cake roll on the diagonal. Reattach it to the center of the cake with some buttercream to resemble a "branch" protruding from the yule log.

5. Spread the remaining buttercream over the cake to cover it. Gently drag a butter knife or a small offset spatula through the frosting to give the appearance of rough tree bark.

6. Chill the cake before serving it to allow the buttercream to set. Before serving, dust with confectioners' sugar and/or cocoa powder, if you like. Refrigerate any leftovers.

7. Serve and enjoy!

Directions:

To Make the Cake:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.

2. Use a 10x15-inch rimmed baking sheet or jelly roll pan and line it with parchment paper.

3. Grease the parchment or spray it with cooking spray. Set the pan aside.

4. Beat the eggs in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment until thick and foamy, for about 5 minutes.

5. Add the sugar, vanilla extract and salt to the eggs and continue beating for 2 minutes.

6. Carefully fold the flour, 2 to 3 tablespoons at a time, into the eggs. Once the flour is incorporated, stop mixing. Do not overmix or the cake will be tough.

7. Gently spread the batter into the prepared pan. There will be peaks in the batter; gently smooth them with a spatula, but do not press the batter down.

8. Bake the cake until the top springs back when gently pressed and the edges pull away from the pan, about 10 minutes.

9. Flip over the baked cake onto a clean, dry kitchen towel and peel off the parchment paper.

10. Let stand for 3 minutes and then lightly score the length of one short side of the cake, leaving a 1-inch border, taking care not to cut through the cake.

11. Fold the scored end of the cake in toward the center and then gently continue to roll the cake wrapped in the towel.

12. Transfer to a rack, seam-side down, and cool completely in the towel.

13. While the cake cools, make the buttercream.

To Make the Chocolate Buttercream:

1. In a clean, dry mixing bowl with a whisk attachment, beat the egg whites on high speed until soft peaks form. Set aside.

2. In a small saucepan, bring the sugar and ⅓ cup water to a boil.

3. Allow sugar-water mixture to boil until it has reduced to a thickened syrup consistency.

4. Begin beating the egg whites on high speed again, and with the motor running, slowly pour the hot sugar syrup into the eggs in a steady stream.

5. Pour the melted chocolate, espresso powder and vanilla extract into the egg whites and continue beating until the meringue has cooled completely, about 5 minutes.

6. Add the softened butter to the meringue, 2 tablespoons at a time, while beating on high speed until all the butter is incorporated.

7. If the buttercream becomes runny during this process, refrigerate the meringue until it has chilled through.

8. Continue the process of beating the butter into the meringue.