

The DISH



VICKI RASMUSSEN
FOOD COLUMNIST
vickir@windomnews.com

I happened to check what food holidays were actually happening in January and this next week just happens to be National Chocolate Cake Day. Now, I've said it before, chocolate is not what I crave (it's usually salty chips and dips). But how can I resist finding some yummy chocolate recipes? Maybe you can try a few and make one for your sweetie in a couple weeks for Valentine's Day.

Chocolate Brownie Bundt Cake

15.25 oz. chocolate cake mix
18.3 oz. brownie mix
4 eggs
1¼ cups water
1 cup oil
1 cup mini chocolate chips

GANACHE:

1 cup heavy cream
12 oz. semi sweet chocolate chips or chopped chocolate

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Generously grease and flour a 10-cup bundt pan.

In a large bowl, beat both mixes, eggs, oil and water until mostly smooth. Stir in the mini chocolate chips.

Pour into the prepared bundt pan and bake for 50-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Place on a wire rack and let cool for 10 minutes before inverting the cake onto a wire rack to cool completely.

To make the ganache, place the chocolate chips in a medium bowl. Heat the heavy cream in a small saucepan until it just begins to boil. Pour the hot cream over the chocolate chips. Let stand for a few minutes, then whisk until ganache is smooth and shiny.

Salted Caramel Chocolate Cake

CHOCOLATE CAKE:

2 cups granulated sugar
1 cup light brown sugar, packed
2¾ cups all-purpose flour (not packed!)
1½ cups unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
3 tsp. baking soda
1½ tsp. baking powder
1¼ tsp. salt
3 large eggs + 2 large egg yolks, at room temperature
1½ cups full-fat sour cream
1/3 cup whole milk
¾ cup vegetable oil (sub in melted coconut oil)
2 Tbsp. vanilla extract
1½ cups hot water

SALTED CARAMEL

CHOCOLATE FROSTING:

2 cups unsalted butter, very soft

4½ cups confectioners' sugar, sifted

¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted

1 tsp. vanilla extract

½ tsp. salt

3 Tbsp. heavy cream (more if needed)

2 Tbsp. salted caramel sauce

GARNISH:

1¼ cups salted caramel sauce

Flaky sea salt

CHOCOLATE CAKE:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut out three 9-inch round segments of parchment paper to line your cake pans with. Spray each pan generously — sides and bottom — with nonstick cooking spray, then place the parchment paper cut out in the bottom of the pans and spray again. It's important to make sure every bit of pan and paper are sprayed so your cakes don't get stuck. Set pans aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or in a large bowl using a handheld electric mixer, combine both sugars, flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder and salt; mix on low until dry ingredients are thoroughly combined. Use your hands to break up any large clumps, if needed.

In a separate bowl, combine the eggs, egg yolks, sour cream, milk, oil and vanilla extract; mix until completely combined. Pour mixture into the dry ingredients and beat on low until just incorporated. Pour in hot water and continue mixing until completely combined; about 1 minute. The batter will be quite thin.

Divide batter evenly among prepared pans. Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes or until a wooden toothpick or cake tester inserted in the center of a cake comes out clean or with just a few moist crumbs attached. Cool cakes for 10 minutes in the pan before removing from pans and transferring to a cooling rack; cool cakes completely before frosting.

CHOCOLATE FROST-

ING: In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the softened butter on medium-speed until completely smooth; about 3 minutes.

Turn the mixer off and sift the powdered sugar and cocoa into the mixing bowl. Turn the mixer on the lowest speed and mix until the sugar/cocoa have been absorbed by the butter; about 2 minutes. Increase mixer speed to medium; add in vanilla extract, salt, heavy cream and salted caramel; beat for 3 minutes. If your frosting appears a little too thin, add a little more confectioners' sugar. If your frosting needs to be thinner, add additional heavy cream, 1 tablespoon at a time.

ASSEMBLY: Using a serrated knife, carefully trim the raised top of each cake, making each one an even, level surface. Transfer ONE layer to a large plate or cake stand. Spread a thin layer of frosting on top, then add a ½ cup of caramel; top with another cake layer, and repeat, thinly spread it with a layer of frosting, then adding a ½ cup of caramel. Top final cake layer and place cake in the fridge to set for 1 hour.

Once set, finish frosting the top and sides of the cake. Sprinkle with sea salt. Slice and serve or keep refrigerated for up to 5 days.

Chocolate Dump Cake

½ cup unsalted butter, melted but not hot

1 box chocolate cake mix

5.1 oz. instant chocolate pudding

2½ cups whole milk

12 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips

Spray a 9-by-13-inch casserole dish with nonstick spray and preheat your oven to 350 degrees.

Sprinkle the chocolate cake mix evenly in the dish.

Sprinkle the instant chocolate pudding mix evenly across the cake mix.

Add the milk to the butter — make sure the butter isn't hot, so the milk doesn't curdle. Pour the milk/butter mix on top of the cake and pudding mix.

Use a whisk to mix slightly — you don't need to stir entirely, but you do want it slightly incorporated so that it bakes evenly. Sprinkle the entire bag of chocolate chips across the top. Place in the oven to bake for 40 to 45 minutes. Serve warm with ice cream.

Chocolate Poke Cake

CAKE:

15.25 oz. devil's food chocolate

cake mix

3 eggs

½ cup oil

½ cup water

14 oz. sweetened condensed milk

2 milk chocolate Hershey bars
1.55 oz each, broken into rectangles

CHOCOLATE WHIPPED CREAM:

2 cups heavy whipped cream, chilled

½ cup powdered sugar

1/3 cup cocoa powder

1 tsp. vanilla

CAKE TOPPING:

Mini chocolate chips

Hershey's chocolate syrup

In a large mixing bowl combine chocolate cake mix, eggs, oil and water. Stir to combine. Follow directions on the back of the cake mix box and cook accordingly in a greased 9-by-13-inch cake pan.

When the cake is done baking, remove it from the oven and immediately poke holes all over the top of the cake with the end of a mixing spoon. Set aside.

In a separate medium bowl, combine sweetened condensed milk and two Hershey chocolate bars. Microwave for 30 seconds, remove from the microwave and stir. Microwave for an additional 15 seconds. Remove from the microwave and stir again. Mix with a spoon until completely combined.

Pour sweetened mixture over the top of the holes on the cake. Use a rubber spatula to push the sweetened mixture down into the holes and the sides of the cake. Let cool on the counter for one hour, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 2 hours to allow sweetened mixture time to soak into the cake.

While the cake is in the refrigerator, place a large mixing bowl in the freezer and allow to chill until ready to use for the chocolate whipped cream topping.

In the large mixing bowl that has been in the freezer, add 2 cups of chilled heavy whipping cream. Use a hand mixer on a fast speed to mix until it starts to thicken.

Add powdered sugar, cocoa powder and vanilla extract. Continue to mix with the hand mixer until incorporated and stiff peaks form.

Immediately spread the chocolate whipped topping over the entire top of the cake. Drizzle chocolate syrup and sprinkle mini chocolate chips on the top of the cake. Refrigerate until ready to serve.