

Black Forest Cake

From Magnolia Table Volume Two | Makes one 8-inch three-layer cake

This is my dad's favorite cake, and it's the only thing he asks for on his birthday, year after year. What sets this cake apart is a small addition of cherries—which if you know anything about my dad's and my shared love for chocolate and cherry, it's what we'd consider a winning combination. — Jo

PREP: 1 hour, plus 1 hour chilling

BAKE: under 25 minutes

COOL: 40 minutes

CAKE INGREDIENTS

Nonstick baking spray	1 teaspoon kosher salt
2 cups granulated sugar	2 large eggs
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour	1 cup whole milk
3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder	1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder	2 teaspoons instant coffee crystals
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda	1 cup hot water

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FILLING INGREDIENTS

One 14.5-ounce can cherries
 2/3 cup granulated sugar
 3 tablespoons cornstarch
 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
 1/4 teaspoon almond extract

WHIPPED INGREDIENTS

1 pint heavy cream
 1/4 cup powdered sugar
 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

for your 4x6 card - trim along the dotted line

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DIRECTIONS

1. To make the cake: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Spray three 8-inch round pans with nonstick baking spray.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the granulated sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
3. In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, combine the eggs, milk, oil, and vanilla and whisk on medium speed until well combined, 1 to 2 minutes. On low speed, slowly add the flour mixture and mix until combined.
4. In a small bowl, stir the coffee crystals into the hot water. With the machine on low, slowly pour the coffee mixture into the mixer. Turn the mixture to medium speed and whisk until the batter is smooth, 1 to 2 minutes.
5. Divide the batter evenly among the three pans. Bake until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean, about 22 minutes. Let the cake layers cool in the pans on wire racks for 10 minutes, then unmold them onto the racks to cool completely. The cake layers must be completely cooled before you assemble the cake.
6. To make the filling: Drain the cherries, reserving 1/4 cup of juice. In a large saucepan, combine the cherries and reserved juice, granulated sugar, and cornstarch. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Reduce the heat and simmer until the juices begin to thicken, about 7 minutes. Stir in the butter and almond extract and set aside to cool to lukewarm.

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7. To make the whipped cream: In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, combine the cream, powdered sugar, and vanilla. Start on low speed, then slowly turn the mixer up to high speed and continue mixing on high for 2 to 3 minutes until fluffy and the cream holds a soft peak when you pull the whisk out of the bowl.
8. Set one cake layer on an 8-inch cake round. Using a serrated knife, cut off the uneven top of the cake so that it's level, reserving the scraps. Using a piping bag fitted with a star tip, pipe the whipped cream to make a 2-inch-thick border around the top of the cake, starting at the outside edge and moving in. Spoon 1/3 cup cherry filling onto the center of the cake and gently spread it out to meet the whipped cream.
9. Add a second cake layer and level the top, again reserving the scraps. Repeat to make a whipped cream border with 1/3 cup cherry filling in the middle.
10. Lay the third layer on the cake. Add a generous cup of whipped cream to the top of the cake and spread to cover the top and the sides. Keep the whipped cream layer thick enough to cover the cake, and always move the spatula through the whipped cream, pushing it towards the unfrosted part.
11. Turn the cake scraps into crumbs. Gently press cake crumbs into whipped cream on the side of the cake. Spoon the remaining cherry filling onto the center of the top of the cake and pipe a border of whipped cream around the edge of the cake to keep the filling from leaking.
12. Refrigerate for 1 hour before serving. Serve cold.
13. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

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