

Donna Hay Chocolate Cake Recipe



Donna Hay chocolate cake recipe is a delightful treat that embodies the essence of indulgence and simplicity. Known for her modern approach to cooking, Donna Hay has established a reputation for creating recipes that are both easy to follow and remarkably delicious. This chocolate cake recipe is no exception, offering a rich, moist texture paired with a deep, satisfying chocolate flavor. Whether you're celebrating a special occasion or simply indulging in a sweet craving, this cake is sure to impress.

Ingredients for Donna Hay's Chocolate Cake

To make Donna Hay's chocolate cake, you will need the following ingredients. The recipe emphasizes high-quality ingredients to achieve the best flavor and texture.

For the Cake

1. 200g (7 oz) dark chocolate (minimum 70% cocoa)
2. 150g (5 oz) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
3. 1 cup (220g) brown sugar
4. 3 large eggs
5. 1 tsp vanilla extract
6. 1 cup (150g) plain (all-purpose) flour
7. 1/2 tsp baking powder
8. Pinch of salt
9. 1/2 cup (125ml) milk

For the Ganache (Optional)

1. 200g (7 oz) dark chocolate, chopped
2. 100ml (3.5 oz) heavy cream
3. 1 tbsp unsalted butter (optional, for a glossy finish)

Equipment Needed

Before diving into the recipe, gather the necessary equipment to ensure a smooth baking process:

- Mixing bowls
- Electric mixer or whisk
- Rubber spatula
- 8-inch round cake pan
- Parchment paper
- Saucepan (for the ganache)
- Double boiler or heatproof bowl (for melting chocolate)

Step-by-Step Instructions for the Cake

Follow these simple steps to create the perfect chocolate cake as per Donna Hay's recipe:

1. Preheat the Oven

Preheat your oven to 160°C (320°F). This temperature is optimal for baking a moist cake without overcooking it.

2. Prepare the Cake Pan

Line the bottom of an 8-inch round cake pan with parchment paper and grease the sides with butter. This will help prevent the cake from sticking.

3. Melt the Chocolate and Butter

In a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water (double boiler method), combine the dark chocolate and unsalted butter. Stir occasionally until both are fully melted and smooth. Remove from heat and let it cool slightly.

4. Mix the Wet Ingredients

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the brown sugar, eggs, and vanilla extract until well combined. Slowly add the cooled chocolate mixture while continuously whisking to ensure a smooth blend.

5. Combine the Dry Ingredients

In another bowl, sift together the plain flour, baking powder, and salt. This step helps aerate the flour and evenly distribute the baking powder.

6. Combine Wet and Dry Mixtures

Gradually fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients using a rubber spatula. Be gentle to avoid overmixing, which can lead to a dense cake.

7. Add Milk

Pour in the milk and mix until just combined. The batter should be smooth and slightly thick.

8. Bake the Cake

Pour the batter into the prepared cake pan and smooth the top. Bake in the preheated oven for approximately 40-45 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean.

9. Cool the Cake

Once baked, remove the cake from the oven and let it cool in the pan for about 10 minutes. Then, transfer it to a wire rack to cool completely.

Making the Ganache (Optional)

While the cake is cooling, you can prepare the ganache if you choose to frost the cake.

1. Heat the Cream

In a small saucepan, heat the heavy cream over low heat until it begins to simmer. Do not let it boil.

2. Combine with Chocolate

Place the chopped dark chocolate in a heatproof bowl. Once the cream is heated, pour it over the chocolate and let it sit for a minute. This allows the chocolate to melt.

3. Stir Until Smooth

Using a whisk, stir the mixture until the chocolate is completely melted and the ganache is smooth. If you want a glossy finish, add the butter and stir until combined.

4. Let the Ganache Cool

Allow the ganache to cool slightly at room temperature until it thickens to your desired consistency for spreading or pouring.

Assembling the Cake

Once the cake has cooled completely, it's time to assemble and decorate.

1. Level the Cake (If Necessary)

If the top of your cake has domed during baking, use a serrated knife to level it. This will create a flat surface for frosting.

2. Frost the Cake

If using ganache, pour it over the center of the cake and let it drip down the sides. Use a spatula to spread it evenly.

3. Decorate (Optional)

You can add additional decorations such as chocolate shavings, fresh berries, or edible flowers for a beautiful presentation.

Serving Suggestions

The Donna Hay chocolate cake pairs wonderfully with various accompaniments. Here are some ideas to enhance your dessert experience:

- Whipped Cream: A dollop of lightly sweetened whipped cream balances the rich chocolate flavor.
- Ice Cream: Vanilla or salted caramel ice cream adds a delightful contrast.
- Fresh Berries: Raspberries or strawberries provide a fresh, tangy element that cuts through the richness.
- Espresso: A shot of espresso or coffee enhances the chocolate flavor and makes for a decadent dessert pairing.

Storage Tips

If you have leftovers (which is unlikely!), here are some tips for storing your cake:

- At Room Temperature: Store the cake in an airtight container for up to 3 days.
- In the Refrigerator: If the ganache is used, store the cake in the fridge for up to a week. Let it come to room temperature before serving for optimal flavor.
- Freezing: Wrap the cake tightly in plastic wrap and then in aluminum foil. It can be frozen for up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight before serving.

Conclusion

The Donna Hay chocolate cake recipe is a testament to the beauty of simple ingredients coming together to create something extraordinary. With its rich flavor, moist texture, and elegant presentation, this cake is perfect for any occasion. Whether you're a seasoned baker or a novice, this recipe is straightforward and forgiving, allowing you to create a delightful dessert that will impress your friends and family. So why not roll up your sleeves and indulge in the sweet world of Donna Hay's chocolate cake? Happy baking!

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the key ingredients in Donna Hay's chocolate cake recipe?

The key ingredients in Donna Hay's chocolate cake recipe typically include high-quality cocoa powder, flour, sugar, eggs, butter, and baking powder.

How long does it take to bake Donna Hay's chocolate cake?

Donna Hay's chocolate cake usually takes about 30 to 35 minutes to bake in a preheated oven.

Can I use dark chocolate instead of cocoa powder in Donna Hay's recipe?

Yes, you can use melted dark chocolate instead of cocoa powder, but it may alter the texture and flavor slightly. Adjust the sugar accordingly as dark chocolate is less sweet.

What is the best way to store leftover chocolate cake?

Leftover chocolate cake can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3 days or in the refrigerator for up to a week.

Is it possible to make Donna Hay's chocolate cake gluten-free?

Yes, you can substitute all-purpose flour with a gluten-free flour blend to make Donna Hay's chocolate cake gluten-free.

What frosting pairs well with Donna Hay's chocolate cake?

A rich chocolate ganache or a simple buttercream frosting works wonderfully with Donna Hay's chocolate cake.

Can I add ingredients like nuts or fruit to the chocolate cake?

Yes, you can add ingredients like chopped nuts or fruit, but be sure to adjust the baking time as it may affect the moisture and density of the cake.

What makes Donna Hay's chocolate cake recipe stand out?

Donna Hay's chocolate cake recipe stands out for its simplicity, rich flavor, and moist texture, making it a favorite among home bakers.

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