



Chocolate-Honey Ganache Layer Cake

Serves 16

by Jill O'Connor from Fine Cooking Issue 119

The combination of natural and Dutch-processed cocoa powder, coffee, and mild honey gives this cake an incredibly moist texture and an intense, complex, and very grown-up chocolate flavor. Making the cake layers ahead allows the flavors to develop, and making the ganache ahead gives it time to firm up to the perfect texture for spreading.

For the cake

cooking spray

2-1/4 oz. (3/4 cup) natural unsweetened cocoa powder

1-1/2 oz. (1/2 cup) Dutch-processed cocoa powder

1-1/2 cups hot, strong brewed coffee

1 cup mild honey, such as clover

13-1/2 oz. (3 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour

1-1/2 tsp. baking powder

1-1/2 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. kosher salt

6 oz. (3/4 cup) unsalted butter, softened

3/4 cup vegetable oil

1 cup packed dark brown sugar

1 cup granulated sugar

4 large eggs, at room temperature

3/4 cup sour cream, at room temperature

2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

For the chocolate-honey ganache

1 lb. semisweet chocolate (60% cacao), finely chopped

2 cups heavy cream

1/4 cup mild honey, such as clover

2 oz. (4 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces

3 Tbs. dark rum (optional)

1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

For the chocolate curls (optional)

1 thick block semisweet chocolate

Make the cake

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F.

Spray two 10-inch round cake pans (with at least 2-inch sides) with cooking spray and line the bottom of each with parchment.

Sift both cocoa powders into a medium bowl. Whisk in the coffee and then the honey. Let cool completely.

Sift the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt into a medium bowl.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed. Gradually add the oil, beating until combined. Add the brown sugar and granulated sugar. Raise the mixer speed to high and beat until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well on medium-high speed after each addition. Add the sour cream and vanilla, beating just until combined. With the mixer on low, alternately add the flour mixture in three additions and the cocoa mixture in two additions, beginning and ending with the flour (scrape down the sides of the bowl as necessary). Beat just until combined. Divide the batter between the two pans, using an offset spatula to spread it evenly. Tap the pans once or twice on the counter to settle the batter.

Bake, rotating the pans halfway through, until a wooden skewer inserted in the center of each cake comes out with only a few moist crumbs clinging to it, 40 to 50 minutes. Cool the cakes in their pans on a rack for 10 to 15 minutes. Run a knife along the sides of the pans, invert the cakes onto the rack, and remove the pans and the parchment. Let cool completely.

Make the ganache

Put the chocolate in a large heatproof bowl.

Combine the heavy cream and honey in a 2-quart saucepan. Stir with a silicone spatula over medium-high heat until the honey dissolves into the cream, about 30 seconds. Just as the cream comes to a simmer, remove it from the heat and pour it over the chocolate. Let stand about 1 minute; then whisk until smooth. Whisk in the butter, rum (if using), and vanilla until the butter is melted and the mixture is glossy. Cool the ganache at room temperature for at least 8 hours. It will thicken as it cools. (The ganache can sit, covered, at room temperature for up to 24 hours.)

Frost the cake

Set one of the cake layers on a serving plate. Spread about 1 cup ganache over the surface of the cake. Top with the second cake layer and spread a very thin layer of ganache over the top and sides of the cake to seal in any crumbs. Refrigerate for 5 to 10 minutes to allow the crumb coat to set. Spread the remaining ganache evenly over the top and sides of the cake.

Make the chocolate curls

To decorate the cake with chocolate curls, if using, soften the chocolate in the microwave on high power for 30 to 50 seconds. Scrape a vegetable peeler firmly down one side of the chocolate block to form thick curls. Put the curls on a plate and refrigerate until they're firm enough to handle. Scatter over the top of the frosted cake.

Make Ahead Tips

For the best spreading texture, the ganache should be made 8 to 24 hours ahead. Keep covered at room temperature.

For the best flavor and texture, the cake should be made at least 1 day before serving. To store at room temperature, wrap each completely cooled layer tightly in 2 layers of plastic wrap and store for up to 2 days.

Up to 10 hours before serving, fill and frost the cake. Keep the cake at room temperature, covered with a dome, until ready to serve.

The cake layers can be frozen for up to 2 weeks: Transfer each completely cooled unfrosted layer to a 10-inch cardboard cake round and wrap tightly in 2 layers of plastic wrap, then in foil, and freeze. Up to 15 hours before serving, remove the foil but not the plastic wrap from the cake layers and thaw at room temperature. When completely thawed, unwrap, fill, and frost the cake.

If you plan to travel with this cake, it's easier to transport if it's refrigerated, uncovered, until the ganache is firm. To aid transport, assemble the cake on a cardboard cake round and transfer it to a covered cake carrier once it's firm. When you arrive at your destination, put the cake on a serving plate and allow it to come to room temperature before slicing.

nutrition information (per serving):

Calories (kcal): 760, Fat (kcal): 46, Fat Calories (g): 400, Saturated Fat (g): 22, Protein (g): 8, Monounsaturated Fat (g): 15, Carbohydrates (mg): 89, Polyunsaturated Fat (mg): 6, Sodium (g): 270, Cholesterol (g): 125, Fiber (g): 4,

★★★★★ by Milansandhu, 1/30/2016 The best cake ever ever ever

★★★★★ by user-3576035, 1/23/2016 Excellent cake. For those who, like me, couldn't find a 10" pan, this will make 3 9" layers. At 9", takes about 35 minutes to cook, and watch it like a hawk! Also, this ganache is beyond delicious.

★★★★★ by Jmfdh, 11/24/2015 Would this work for cupcakes? How many & any changes?

★★★★★ by Katyushka, 4/16/2015 My very best chocolate cake!!! Moist, rich, and beautiful. Made it for a special Birthday. Decorated with whole roasted coffee beans. Simply delicious. Thank you for this recipe

★★★★★ by chefjeff, 1/24/2015 This cake was more special than I can possibly say. Oil in the batter in addition to the butter, gave us the most moistly textured cake ever. My only deviation had to do with the Ganache, and this tweak will be used every time I make this cake. My ganache did not set up, and this goes for even after a stint in the fridge to speed things up. I melted 4 additional ounces of chocolate and quickly stirred it into the chilled ganache. The result was fabulous, and I fully assembled the cake a day in advance (covered at room temp) before slicing. It was perfect in every way, and I believe now that this is a cake which can be fully assembled a couple of days in advance if desired.

★★★★★ by HildaC, 10/2/2012 This is a spectacular cake! It's moist and rich and the ganache is heavenly. Even after 3 days in the fridge it was still wonderfully moist and fresh tasting (just let it come to room temp) You have to make this cake, it will be one of the very best chocolate cakes you will ever make!

★★★★★ by sunday11, 9/24/2012 Wow, wow, wow, oh did I say how good this is! My only problem but it turned out a benefit was that I did not have 2 10 inch cake pans, so I weighed out the batter in my nine inch pans judging for the cake rise and put the remainder into 2 4 inch bread pans. I wrapped them in the saran wrap for 24 hours. The benefit to this was that My husband and I got to share one the night before I served it to guests, the other I gave to a neighbor. Very good chocolate cake, moist, nice ganache, love the honey in both. It was a nice ending to the bacon-wrapped smoked turkey from the oct/nov issue.

★★★★★ by KarenAnne, 9/20/2012 This is a terrific cake for a special occasion or for serving several people. First, it tastes great, and makes up beautifully as in the photo. (This is the wow-very rich chocolate cake that you spend \$\$\$ a slice at a restaurant). Second, the 10 inch cake pan size easily serves several enabling this recipe to be a great dessert for company or pot lucks. And last, I love that you can prepare the cake layers and the granache at separate times so that you don't spend the entire day just making and putting the whole thing together.



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