Torta Caprese

SERVES Serves 12 to 14

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

Torta caprese is an Italian flourless chocolate cake that contains finely ground almonds, which subtly break up the fudgy crumb. Our version contains melted butter and bittersweet chocolate as well as vanilla, cocoa powder, and salt that boost the chocolate's complexity. Instead of grinding almonds in a food processor, we use commercial almond flour (commercial "almond meal," which may or may not be made from skin-on nuts, also works well). All flourless cakes are aerated with whipped eggs instead of chemical leaveners, and we found that whipping the whites and yolks separately in a stand mixer, each with half the sugar, created strong, stable egg foams that lightened the rich, heavy batter and prevented it from collapsing after baking. Dusted with confectioners' sugar and served with almond- or orange-infused whipped cream, this cake is ideal for entertaining. It also tastes great the next day, so it's an excellent make-ahead

dessert.

INGREDIENTS

- [ ] 12 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 12 pieces

- [ ] 6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped

- [ ] 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

- [ ] 4 large eggs, separated

- [ ] 1 cup (7 ounces) granulated sugar, divided

- [ ] 2 cups (7 ounces) almond flour

- [ ] 2 tablespoons Dutch-processed cocoa powder

- [ ] ½ teaspoon salt

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

✳ For the best results, use a good-quality bittersweet chocolate and Dutch-processed cocoa here. We developed this recipe using our favorite bittersweet chocolate, Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Premium Baking Bar, and our favorite Dutch-processed cocoa, Droste Cacao. Either almond flour or almond meal will work in this recipe; we used Bob's Red Mill. Serve with lightly sweetened whipped cream or with Amaretto Whipped Cream or Orange Whipped Cream.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Lightly spray 9-inch springform pan with vegetable oil spray.

2 Microwave butter and chocolate in medium bowl at 50 percent power, stirring often, until melted, 1½ to 2 minutes. Stir in vanilla and set aside.

☐ Confectioners' sugar (optional)

3   Using stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment, whip egg whites on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium-high and continue to whip, slowly adding ½ cup granulated sugar, until whites are glossy and thick and hold stiff peaks, about 4 minutes longer. Transfer whites to large bowl.

4   Add egg yolks and remaining ½ cup granulated sugar to now-empty mixer bowl and whip on medium-high speed until thick and pale yellow, about 3 minutes, scraping down bowl as necessary. Add chocolate mixture and mix on medium speed until incorporated, about 15 seconds. Add almond flour, cocoa, and salt and mix until incorporated, about 30 seconds.

5   Remove bowl from mixer and stir few times with large rubber spatula, scraping bottom of bowl to ensure almond flour is fully incorporated. Add one-third of whipped whites to bowl, return bowl to mixer, and mix on medium speed until no streaks of white remain, about 30 seconds, scraping down bowl halfway through mixing. Transfer batter to bowl with remaining whites. Using large rubber spatula, gently fold whites into batter until no streaks of white remain. Pour batter into prepared pan, smooth top with spatula, and place pan on rimmed baking sheet.

6   Bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out with few moist crumbs attached, about 50 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking. Let cake cool in pan on wire rack for 20 minutes. Remove side of pan and let cake cool completely, about 2 hours. (Cake can be wrapped in plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for up to 3 days.)

7   Dust top of cake with confectioners' sugar, if using. Using offset spatula, transfer cake to serving platter. Cut into wedges and serve.