

Chocolate Cassata

<http://userealbutter.com/2012/11/14/chocolate-cassata-cake-recipe/>

inspired by [Pizzeria Locale](#)

2 9-inch chocolate chiffon cakes
2 cups boozy simple syrup
4 cups ricotta filling
3 cups chocolate glaze

Make the components: Timing wise, make the candied citrus peels first. Then bake the cakes. Make the ricotta filling and the boozy simple syrup. Finally, make the glaze. Now you're ready.

Assemble the cake: Slice the cakes into two even layers each so that you have four layers of cake. Set the base of one of the cakes, cut-side up, on a cooling rack over a baking sheet (reserve the other base for the last layer). Apply the boozy simple syrup to the cake with a pastry brush. Spread a third of the ricotta filling over the cake. Set another cake layer on the ricotta filling and repeat the previous steps. When you get to the final layer, set it on another cooling rack, cut-side up. Apply the boozy simple syrup to the cut-side and then CAREFULLY turn the cut-side down and place it on top of the final ricotta layer. Make sure the layers are all aligned. Scoop a cup of the ganache into a small bowl and place it in the freezer for a few minutes until it begins to thicken. Use the thickened ganache to spread a crumb coat around the sides of the cake (to fill any gaps and essentially create a smooth surface). If there are any holes on the top of the cake, use some ganache to fill those in too. When the rest of the glaze is the right consistency (smooths out any disruption on the surface, yet thick enough that it doesn't run straight off the side of the cake), pour it over the center of the cake (keep a little bit for touch ups). Use a spatula to smooth it from the center out to the edges. Work on one location at a time and push the glaze over the edge, quickly smoothing the glaze around the sides. Continue to do this around the cake until the entire cake is glazed. Decorate as desired and refrigerate the cake. Serves 10-12.

candied citrus peels

2 cups sugar
3 cups water
2 lemons, peels of (no pith – the white stuff!)
2 oranges, peels of (no pith – the white stuff!)

Place the sugar and water in a medium saucepan and stir over high heat until the sugar dissolves. Bring the sugar to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and stir in the peels. Let simmer for 2 hours or until the peels are translucent and candied. Drain the peels. Reserve the citrus syrup for other uses (cocktails, cakes, syrups, etc.).

chocolate chiffon cake

makes 2 11×17-inch sheet pans or 2 9×3-inch rounds

10.5 oz. (2 1/3 cups) cake flour (I used all-purpose flour)

4 oz. (1 cup) cocoa powder

8.75 oz. (2 cups) confectioners sugar

0.5 oz baking powder (omitted at 8500 ft.)

7 oz whole milk

6 oz canola oil

3 eggs (4 eggs if small)

1 tsp almond extract

13 oz. (or just 12 large) egg whites

9 oz. (1 1/4 cup) granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 375°F. Prep pans by buttering bottom and sides. Place parchment in pan and butter the parchment. Sift dry ingredients, except the granulated sugar, into a large bowl. Mix all ingredients, except the 13 ounces of egg whites and the granulated sugar, in the large bowl until combined. Whip whites and granulated sugar to medium peaks. Fold into batter gently a third at a time (tempering the batter). Bake until set, about 20-25 minutes for sheet pans and 35-40 minutes for round pans. I recommend checking them early with the toothpick test – it should come out clean or have crumbs stuck to it – but no gooey batter! Remove from oven and remove from pan. Let cool completely on a rack.

ricotta filling

2 lbs. ricotta cheese (whole milk), strained of excess liquid

2 1/4 cups confectioners sugar

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

2 tsps vanilla extract

1 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, grated

1/2 cup candied orange and lemon peel, chopped

1 cup dry-roasted unsalted pistachios, chopped*

* If you want to peel the skins from the pistachios, blanch the nuts in boiling water for a minute, then drain. Rub the pistachios with a kitchen towel or peel them by hand. Let dry.

Mix the ricotta cheese, confectioners sugar, ground cinnamon, and vanilla extract together. Stir in the grated chocolate, chopped candied orange and lemon peels, and the chopped pistachios. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

boozy simple syrup

1 cup water

1 cup sugar

1/4 cup (or more) Grand Marnier or liqueur of your choosing

Stir the water and sugar together in a small saucepan over high heat until the sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil for a minute. Remove from heat and let cool. Add the Grand Marnier.

glaze

1 lb. semi-sweet chocolate, chopped

1 cup heavy cream

1/2 cup unsalted butter, room temperature

Place the chocolate in a medium bowl and set over a hot water bath for a few minutes until it begins to melt. Alternatively, you can microwave the chocolate at half power for a minute at a time until it starts to melt. Heat the heavy cream in a saucepan over high heat until it begins to boil. Remove from heat and immediately pour the hot cream over the chocolate. Let sit for a minute, then stir together until it becomes a dark and shiny ganache. While the ganache is still hot, stir the butter in by pieces until melted and completely incorporated.