

Mocha Hazelnut Torte

<http://userealbutter.com/2007/09/09/mocha-hazelnut-torte-cake-recipe/>

Chocolatier March 1994 with vanilla custard sauce omitted

chocolate genoise

7 oz. bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
6 tbsps unsalted butter
2 tsps vanilla extract
2/3 cup cake flour
2 tsps baking powder (omitted for my elevation)
4 large eggs
4 large egg yolks
1/2 cup granulated sugar

hazelnut meringue

4 oz. roasted hazelnuts
1/2 cup plus 2 tbsp confectioners' sugar
3/4 tsp flour
2 large egg whites
1/4 cup granulated sugar

espresso pastry cream

8 large egg yolks
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/4 tsp salt
3 tbsps cornstarch
2 1/2 cups milk
2 tbsps unsalted butter
2 tsps ground espresso

chocolate ganache

4 oz. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
3 tbsps heavy cream
2 tbsps crème fraiche (I didn't have any, so I used 2 tbsp cream)

Make the chocolate genoise: Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 17.5x11.5-inch baking pan with parchment paper. Melt chocolate and butter over a double boiler. Stir in vanilla extract and set aside until ready to use. Sift together the cake flour and baking powder. Set aside. Combine the eggs, egg yolks, and sugar in the mixing bowl of a stand mixer and whisk together over a barely simmering water bath. Whisk constantly for 2-3 minutes until mixture is very warm, but not hot [that's vague, no?]. Attach bowl to mixer stand with wire whip attachment and beat on high speed until very thick and holds a ribbon – about 3 minutes. Fold the sifted flour into egg mixture in two batches. Fold in the reserved chocolate mixture. Pour batter into the pan and spread it evenly. Bake

10-12 minutes until cake springs back when lightly touched. Run a knife around the edges to loosen, then invert onto a wire rack to cool. Remove the parchment paper.

Make the hazelnut meringue: Preheat oven to 300°F. Line a 17.5x11.5-inch pan with parchment paper. Set aside. In bowl of a food processor fitted with metal blade, pulse the hazelnuts, powdered sugar, and flour until nuts are finely ground. In a dry, grease-free mixing bowl of a stand mixer, beat egg whites on high speed to soft peaks, about 1 minute. Gradually add sugar to the whites and continue beating on high until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Do not overbeat. Gently and quickly fold in the ground hazelnuts one third at a time. Glue the corners of the parchment down with a dab of the meringue. Spread meringue evenly onto paper to cover at least an 8×8-inch square [or a size big enough to cover half the baking sheet because you will layer it with the two halves of the genoise.] Bake for about 35 minutes, until light brown and no longer wet. Set aside to cool.

Make the espresso pastry cream: In a large stainless steel bowl, vigorously whisk the egg yolks, sugar, and salt until pale yellow and thick enough to hold a ribbon on the surface when whisk is lifted (about 2-3 minutes). Stir in the cornstarch. In a medium saucepan bring the milk to a boil, then remove from heat. Using a wire whisk, slowly incorporate the hot milk into the beaten egg/sugar mixture. Return the mixture to the pan and cook over low heat, whisking constantly for 5 to 7 minutes, until thick and creamy. When the mixture just returns to a boil, immediately remove from heat and scrape into a bowl to stop the cooking process. Stir in the butter and the ground espresso. Set bowl over ice bath and stir occasionally until cooled. Place plastic wrap directly on surface to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until well chilled.

Make the chocolate ganache: Place chocolate into a small bowl. In a saucepan, whisk together the cream and the crème fraiche and bring to a simmer. Remove from heat and pour over chocolate. Let stand for 30 seconds to soften the chocolate, then gently whisk until smooth.

Assemble the torte: Cut the chocolate genoise into two 8-inch squares [I just cut the sheet in half]. Spread 1/2 of the pastry cream over one of the chocolate cake layers. Trim the hazelnut meringue so that all the edges are straight [I trimmed after assembly]. Place hazelnut meringue on top of the cream layer. Spread remaining pastry cream over the meringue. Place the second layer of chocolate cake on top. Glaze the top layer of the cake with the ganache. Garnish as you like. Refrigerate for several hours until firm. To serve, allow torte to temper slightly so that you can cut easily through the ganache. With a serrated knife, cut the torte into twenty-five 1 1/2-inch squares.