

Chocolate-Beet Pound Cake with Hazelnuts & Crème Anglaise

Ingredients

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Instructions

Put the peeled and chopped beets into the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade attachment. Put the lid on and pulse the beets 3 or 4 times, then run the machine about 10 seconds. The beets should be finely chopped, but not yet pureed.

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F. Butter the bottom and sides of a 10" x6" loaf pan, then dust the buttered surface with 2 tablespoons cocoa powder, tapping out the excess.

In a small bowl mix 2 tablespoons nuts with the finely chopped hazelnuts. Set aside. Into a larger bowl sift the remaining flour, remaining cocoa powder, salt and baking powder. Afterwards use a whisk to make sure the cocoa is well and evenly distributed.

Using an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar together on high speed until light and very fluffy. Turn the mixer to low and add the eggs one at a time, followed by the vanilla, and the beets. Continue mixing until well incorporated.

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This next step should be done by hand to avoid over-mixing. Stir 1/3 of the flour mixture into the beat mixture, followed by 1/3 of the milk. Repeat two more times with the remaining flour and milk. Folding in the pecan on the last addition. Mix until just incorporated.

Spoon the batter into the loaf pan. It will nearly fill the pan. This cake is dense and will not rise a lot. Bake the cake for 1 hour 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. The top will crack in baking. This is no problem.

Let the cake cool in the pan and on a rack about 30 minutes, then carefully remove it from the pan setting it cracked side up back onto the rack. Place a plate under the rack. Using a pastry brush, brush the simple syrup over all the outside surfaces. Repeat this process while the cake is still warm 3 or 4 times until all the simple syrup is gone. Let the cake cool completely, about 1 hour. Just before serving dust

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the top with confectioners' sugar and some crème anglaise on the side (recipe follows)

Crème Anglaise

Set a large fine strainer over a medium bowl and set the bowl in a shallow pan of cold water.

In a large saucepan, combine the half-and-half and vanilla bean and cook over moderately low heat just until small bubbles appear around the rim, about 5 minutes.

In another medium bowl, whisk the sugar and egg yolks just until combined. Whisk in half of the hot half-and-half in a thin stream. Pour the mixture into the saucepan and cook over moderate heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the sauce has thickened slightly, 4 to 5 minutes. Immediately strain the sauce into the bowl in the cold water bath to stop the cooking. Scrape the vanilla seeds into the sauce.

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Serve right away or refrigerate until chilled.