

Brighten Your Holidays with this Browned Butter Cake

By Susie Iventosch



Browned Butter Cake with Toffee-Whipped Cream Filling and Cocoa Frosting
Photo Susie Iventosch

When I was looking for a new “yellow” cake recipe, I ran across this one and it is delicious. It called for a browned butter frosting, but we loved the chocolate frosting with this cake. We added the whipped cream-toffee filling, and it is a natural with the subtle browned butter flavor of the cake.

It seems a little labor intensive, because you first brown the butter for the cake, then chill again until solid in the refrigerator. At that point, you follow the usual process of softening the browned butter at room temperature, just as you would any normal stick of butter when baking a cake or cookies.

This cake is rich and toasty

and perfect for the holidays.

To brown, heat butter in a heavy sauce pan over low heat, stirring occasionally, until melted. Continue to cook, stirring often, until butter foams and then foam subsides. Butter will begin to take on a nutty aroma and the solids will become a light golden brown. This takes anywhere from 5-10 minutes, depending upon the heat.

When butter is browned, remove to a bowl and allow to cool to room temperature. Then refrigerate until solid. This can be done a few days ahead of time. When ready to bake the cake, remove browned butter from refrigerator and bring to room temperature until soft enough to beat.

Browned Butter Cake

(Serves 8-10)

INGREDIENTS

3 sticks unsalted butter
2/3 cup granulated sugar
2/3 cup light brown sugar
5 large eggs, at room temperature
2 1/8 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 350F. Grease an 8-inch square baking pan.

In a large bowl, beat the softened browned butter with electric beaters or mixer, until soft and creamy. Add white and brown sugar and continue to beat until well incorporated and mixture looks fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, and continue to beat after each, scraping down bowl as needed.

Combine flour, baking powder and salt, and set aside. Add to batter alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour mixture.

Pour batter into prepared cake pan and bake for approximately 30 minutes, and then cover top loosely with foil, to keep from getting too browned. Continue to cook for another 5-10 minutes or so, until cake tester comes out clean. Check to make sure it is not getting too well done.

Remove from oven and cool completely.

When cooled, remove cake from pan and cut in half horizontally. Spread toffee-whipped cream filling evenly over bottom half. Place top half over the filling and refrigerate until cold.

Remove from refrigerator and frost tops and sides with cocoa frosting. Garnish with extra toffee bits.

Keep refrigerated and take out of refrigerator about 10 minutes before serving.

(You can also use two 8-inch round pans, but bake for a shorter time. This way you won't have to cut the cake horizontally, just spread filling in between layers before frosting.)

Toffee-Whipped Cream Filling

1 1/2 cups whipping cream
1/4 cup powdered sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
4 Heath Bars, or your favorite toffee, broken into small bits.

Whip cream until stiff peaks form. Fold in powdered sugar, vanilla and toffee bits. Refrigerate until ready to use. Can be made a couple of hours before assembling cake.

Cocoa Frosting

1 stick unsalted butter
1/2 cup cocoa powder
4 cups powdered sugar
1/4 cup milk
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Beat butter until soft and creamy. Slowly beat in cocoa powder. Then add powdered sugar, alternately with milk until desired creaminess. Stir in vanilla.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com.

This recipe can be found on our website:

www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



Lafayette's Bistro Burger a High-End Burger Haven

By A.K. Carroll



Photos A.K. Carroll



stacked and splayed atop the sheet of metal are slices of tomato, leaves of lettuce, rosette pickles, spicy sprouts, and fanned avocado wedges – all the fixings for Burger Bistro's deconstructed Lafayette Burger. Though it isn't the best burger I have ever eaten, it is certainly one of the prettiest.

They can't possibly do this in the Financial District, I think, at least not during lunchtime. The calm of the dining room is one of the many differences you will notice at Bistro Burger's most recent site in Lafayette, located in the former location of Susan Foord Catering and Café, behind Oyama Sushi and just off of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Though plans for the eatery's opening have been in the works since early this year, Bistro Burger didn't crack its doors until early October; its grand opening was Nov. 19.

Owner Ali Kazemi grabbed the Lafayette space on a bit of a whim. When a friend of a

friend mentioned that Susan Foord was closing, he also suggested that Kazemi move in. A resident of Piedmont, Kazemi decided to have a look, and before he knew it he was making plans to overhaul the space, installing the grease trap, plumbing, and floor plan necessary to transform it into a modest, yet modern eating establishment.

In contrast to the hustle and bustle of Kazemi's FiDi Bistro Burgers, the Lafayette outpost is a breath of suburban calm. In place of bumper-to-bumper traffic and lines winding out the door, you will find clean open seating, a sunny back patio, and attentive table service. "It's an outlier," said Kazemi, who views the Lafayette Bistro as more of a "high end" endeavor. It is no white tablecloth to be sure, but it is a step up from your usual burger joint, and offers more sophisticated entrée options including a marinated tri-tip sandwich, a grilled salmon burger, and a spinach salad served with goat cheese, pumpkin seeds, and strawberry shallot dressing.

The salad is the creation of Chef Pietro Buttitta, who was hired exclusively for the Lafayette location and is crafting a customized menu that will feature pasta, brunch, and steak by the end of the year. You will find some of the same classic burgers, seasoned sides and fresh salads that feature at Bistro's other four locations to be sure, as well as exclusives like the spicy kale salad, the Lafayette burger, and truffle parmesan fries that I tried during my visit. There is also a children's menu to accommodate for the younger crowd and a spacious 10-stool bar that serves a selection of wines and beers – the only Bistro location to do so.

If you're the kind of person who prefers to "ease in" when trying new things, you might check out Bistro Burger's Happy Hour, which runs from 4 to 6 p.m. daily and features \$2 off

all beer and wine, burgers, sandwiches, salads and small plates. Or, if you're like me, you can Russian roulette the menu and dig right in.

I started with a simple kale salad, topped with crispy fried chickpeas and shredded parmesan and dressed in a flavorful spicy dressing influenced with Indian flavors. Next came a basket of the signature house truffle fries, decked with zesty herbs and generously sprinkled with parmesan. The fries were French-cut and thin, soft but not soggy and fresh from the fryer. No sauce required, though the house ketchup is a treat, more of a sweet marinara than its vinegary tomato sauce relatives. In comparison to the heavy indulgence of my dining partner's mushroom and brie-topped Paris burger, my Angus beef Lafayette burger was lush and fresh with crisp toppings, spicy sprouts, and gooey pepper jack served with a buttery yellow bun. There was some assembly required, but I have never had a problem with licking my fingers when they are dripping with delicious.

Though I didn't intend to finish a salad, fries, and an entire burger (4 and 6 oz. patties are available), before I knew it my plate was empty and my napkin was covered. A yellow-hued spear-cut pickle marinated in cumin, coriander, caraway seeds, and other "special" ingredients was the perfect way to end my meal, though Bistro does offer dessert. Maybe next time I'll go for the dark chocolate brownie or creamy banana milkshake. I'm sure to need a napkin regardless.

965 Mountain View Dr., Lafayette
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Editor's note: In the Oct. 5 Business Briefs, Lamorinda Weekly stated Bistro Burger serves cocktails, but it only offers a selection of beers and wines.

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