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## Nothin' says lovin' like chocolate cake in the oven

By Susie Iventosch



What can say "I love you" more than a beautiful homemade cake? This cake is especially fun because the loves in your life won't know there's a delicious dark chocolate cake inside until you cut into it. This cake recipe is one of my favorites because it's so moist and the chocolate chips make it even more so. I have been infatuated with the idea of making chocolate cake with white frosting ever since our friends' wedding in 1989, although it's taken me all these years to actually do it! They had a gorgeous tiered wedding cake, and I just loved the fact the cake inside was chocolate instead of the usual vanilla. It was the first time I'd ever seen that in a wedding cake and it was fabulous. Since they are still blissfully married, I thought it would be the perfect recipe for Valentine's Day in honor of them.

Polka Dot Valentine's Cake Photo Susie Iventosch

Cooking Term of the Week

Xantham Gum

Xantham gum is used as a stabilizer, emulsifier and thickener in food products. It is made from the fermentation of corn sugar. Xantham gum has the special ability of holding particles of food together, thereby making it a good stabilizer and yielding smooth, creamy textures in the products it's used in such as salad dressings, yogurts, sauces, and even ice creams. It is sometimes used as a substitute for gluten in baked goods.

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup boiling hot water
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 cup canola oil
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup dark chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup white chocolate chips or bar broken into small bits
- 1 recipe vanilla buttercream frosting (see below)

### DIRECTIONS

Line the bottom of two 9-inch cake pans with parchment paper. Spray paper and sides of pan with cooking spray.

Preheat oven to 350 F.

In a large measuring cup or small bowl, mix 1 cup of boiling water with cocoa powder and whisk until cocoa is dissolved. Add vanilla, and set aside. Cool to room temperature.

In a large bowl mix flour, baking soda, salt and sugar. Stir in cocoa powder mixture, additional cup of cold water and oil. Mix well. Add dark and white chocolate chips and stir to incorporate.

Divide batter evenly between the two prepared cake pans and bake for approximately 25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out clean.

Remove from oven, cool and turn layers out onto cooling racks.

Frost with vanilla buttercream frosting and decorate with dark chocolate dots!

Vanilla Buttercream Frosting

#### INGREDIENTS

3 sticks (1 1/2 cups) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

6 (or so) cups powdered sugar, sifted

2 tsp. vanilla extract

3 Tbsp. half & half or milk

1/2 tsp. salt

#### DIRECTIONS

Place butter in a large mixing bowl or the bowl of your mixer. Beat on high speed until very fluffy and very pale yellow, approximately 5 minutes, scraping down sides as you go.

Slowly add the powdered sugar, about 1/4 cup at a time, and beating after each addition until well incorporated. (You may need slightly more or less of the powder sugar than instructed, depending upon the moisture content of your butter, so have a half cup or so extra powdered sugar on hand in case.)

Beat in vanilla and half & half. Adjust to desired spreading consistency with remaining powdered sugar.

Set about 1/2 cup of the frosting aside for decorating the cake.

Place one layer on the cake plate and frost the top of that layer. Now, place the second layer on top and completely frost top and sides of cake.

Add cocoa powder and/or brown food coloring to remaining half cup of frosting and using an icing bag and cake decorating tip, decorate top and sides of cake with dots or whatever pattern you like!



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