**RED VELVET CAKE**

**FROSTING**

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\begin{align*}
\frac{1}{2} \text{ pound (2½ sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature} \\
4 \text{ cups confectioners' sugar, sifted} \\
1 \text{ teaspoon vanilla extract, preferably Bourbon vanilla} \\
1 \text{ pound cream cheese, at room temperature} \\
\frac{1}{2} \text{ cup mascarpone cheese} \\
\frac{1}{2} \text{ cup pecans, finely chopped}
\end{align*}
\]

**TO MAKE THE FROSTING**

Combine the butter, sugar, and vanilla in the bowl of a stand mixer. With the paddle attachment, mix the ingredients on medium speed until they are smooth and creamy. Add the cream cheese and mascarpone and mix until well blended.

**TO ASSEMBLE THE CAKE**

Using a long serrated knife, shave off a very thin layer of cake from the top and bottom of each cake layer (this will help the frosting cling to the cake). Place the trimmings in the bowl of a food processor and process to very fine crumbs; reserve for the decoration.

Set one of the cake layers on a cake stand. With a narrow offset spatula, spread a layer of frosting across the top of the first layer, spreading it to an even depth of \(\frac{1}{2}\) inch. Place the second cake layer on top. With the remaining frosting, evenly cover the sides and top of the cake.

Mix together the reserved cake crumbs and pecans. Immediately after applying frosting, decorate the sides of the cake with a thin layer of the crumb mixture. The top of the cake should remain frosted white. Store the cake in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.