



AGRICULTURAL
SOUTH

MAKES
1
2-INCH
LAYER
CAKE

ACTIVE TIME
45 MINS
TOTAL TIME
**3 HRS
15 MINS**

RED VELVET CAKE



ALTHOUGH MANY THINK that red velvet cake has been an American standby for centuries, it is actually a twentieth-century invention, having originated in the 1920s. The ruby-hued chocolate cake was later adopted with delight by African Americans and began turning up on their menus. The famous Amy Ruth's soul food restaurant in Harlem began serving it in 1998, and Cake Man Raven opened one of the first bakeries devoted to the cake in Brooklyn in 2000.

CAKE

2½ cups cake flour
2 tablespoons Dutch-process cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
1½ cups vegetable oil
2 large eggs
1½ cups granulated sugar
1 cup buttermilk, preferably full fat
2 tablespoons red food coloring
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract, preferably Bourbon vanilla
1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar

TO MAKE THE CAKE

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter and lightly flour two 8-by-3-inch nonstick cake pans.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa, baking soda, and salt.

Combine the oil, eggs, sugar, buttermilk, food coloring, vanilla, and vinegar in the bowl of a stand mixer. Using the whisk attachment, mix on medium-low speed until the mixture is smooth.

Set the mixer at low speed and gradually add the dry ingredients, mixing just to the point a batter has formed. Stop the machine, scrape down the sides of the bowl, and then mix for another 30 seconds.

Evenly divide the batter between the prepared cake pans. Bake until the cake pulls away slightly from the sides of the pans, about 30 minutes. A toothpick inserted in the center should come out clean. Invert the cakes onto wire racks, lift off the pan, turn upright, and let cool to room temperature.

TO MAKE THE FROSTING

Combine the butter, sugar, and vanilla in the bowl of the 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.

FROSTING

½ pound (2½ sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
4 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
1 teaspoon Bourbon vanilla extract
1 pound cream cheese, at room temperature
¼ cup mascarpone cheese
½ cup pecans, finely chopped

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 ½ 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.



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