

Chocolate Lovers Workshop

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

6:30pm CT

What to expect in your cooking class:

My classes are a place where curious home chefs and their families can learn new cooking skills and grow confidence in the kitchen. I want to help you become the hero of your mealtime. I will verbally guide you through every step - starting from prepping ingredients, cooking steps until your dishes are complete and plated. I will be cooking alongside you, sharing instructions, tips and tricks throughout class.

Your class is your time to ask me questions, ask for feedback, learn a little something and most importantly, have fun!

How to prepare for your class:

- For class, simply purchase your ingredients & gather your kitchen equipment from the following recipes. For a more relaxed class, prep your ingredients ahead of time (chopping, measuring). This is not required, however, as I will guide you through every step of preparation. Kitchen tools are **bolded** in each recipe.
- Shop for ingredients intuitively. If there are any ingredients featured in this recipe that aren't your favorite or not available in your local market, not to worry! Have the ingredients you enjoy or ingredients you were able to source available for class and let me know what you do have on hand for your dish. I will guide you through the preparation and cooking steps.
- Before your class starts, it's important that you have a solid internet connection, limited background noises and distractions, and are in a brightly-lit kitchen.
- I will want to see your work and cook stations as much as possible. Try to prop your device on a stack of cookbooks or use a tripod to give a good view to me.

Chocolate Mousse Cake

Ingredients:

Cake

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 3/4 cups granulated sugar
2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
2 tsp espresso powder (optional)
1/2 cup canola or vegetable oil
2 large eggs, at room temperature
3/4 cup full fat sour cream, at room temperature
1/2 cup buttermilk, at room temperature*

2 tsp pure vanilla extract
1/2 cup hot water or coffee

Chocolate Mousse

1/2 cup hot water
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
Two 4-ounce semi-sweet chocolate bars, finely chopped
2 cups heavy whipping cream
2 tbsp powdered sugar

1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Chocolate Ganache

Two 4-ounce semi-sweet chocolate bars, finely chopped
1 cup heavy whipping cream

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease **four 8-inch or 9-inch cake pans**, line with **parchment paper** rounds, then grease the parchment paper.

Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and espresso powder (if using) together in a **large bowl**. Set aside.

Using a **handheld or stand mixer** fitted with a whisk attachment (or you can use a whisk) mix the oil, eggs, and sour cream together on medium-high speed until combined. Add the buttermilk and vanilla and mix until combined. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients, add the hot water/coffee, and whisk or beat on low speed until the batter is completely combined.

Divide batter evenly between 4 pans. Bake for 19–23 minutes. The cakes are done when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove the cakes from the oven and set on a wire rack. Allow to cool completely in the pan.

As the cakes cool, prepare the chocolate mousse so it can chill and be ready at the same time as the cake layers. **Whisk** the hot water and cocoa powder together. Set aside.

Melt the chopped chocolate bars in a **double boiler or use the microwave**. If using the microwave: place the chopped chocolate in a medium heat-proof bowl. Melt in 20 second increments in the microwave, stirring after each increment until completely melted and smooth. Pour hot water/cocoa mixture into melted chocolate and stir until thick and smooth. Set aside.

Using a **hand mixer or a stand mixer** fitted with a whisk attachment, whip the heavy cream, confectioners' sugar, and vanilla extract together on medium-high speed until medium peaks form, about 3-4 minutes. Pour in the chocolate mixture and using a **spoon or rubber spatula**, gently fold together. Avoid over-mixing which can deflate/thin out the mousse. Cover mousse and chill in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours and up to 2 days. Makes about 4.5 cups (about 910g) chocolate mousse.

Once cakes are cooled level the cakes if needed: using a **large serrated knife**, slice a thin layer off the tops of the cakes to create a flat surface. Place 1 cake layer on your cake stand, cake turntable, or serving plate. Using a large **icing spatula**, evenly cover the top with about 1.5 cups chocolate mousse. Top with 2nd layer and evenly cover the top with 1.5 cups chocolate mousse. Top with the third cake layer, then spread another 1.5 cups mousse evenly on top. Save a large spoonful of mousse for a thin crumb coat. Top with final 4th cake layer. Spread any remaining mousse around the sides as a crumb coat. Run a **bench scraper** around the cake to smooth out crumb coat. Refrigerate cake for at least 1 hour and up to 4 hours. Prepare the ganache as you wait.

For the ganache, place chopped chocolate in a **medium heat-proof bowl**. Heat the cream in a **small saucepan** over medium heat until it begins to gently simmer. Pour over chocolate in the bowl and let it sit for 2-3 minutes to gently soften the chocolate. With a metal spoon or small rubber spatula, very slowly stir until chocolate has melted and mixture is smooth. Once ganache mixture is smooth, let it cool for 20 minutes at room temperature before spreading on chilled cake.

Pour/spoon ganache on chilled cake. Smooth the top with an icing spatula and the sides with a bench scraper. Top with optional garnish such as fresh berries and/or chocolate shavings.

Chocolate Covered Strawberries

Ingredients:

2 pounds strawberries washed and patted dry
1 lb high quality dark, milk or white chocolate

Instructions:

Line a couple of **baking sheets** with **parchment paper**. Gently wash the strawberries and pat them completely dry with paper towels. Fill a **medium pot** about $\frac{1}{4}$ full of water and bring to a low boil, then reduce to a simmer.

Chop the chocolate with a **sharp knife**. Place $\frac{3}{4}$ of the chocolate into the top of a **double boiler or heat-safe glass bowl** that is larger than the pot you plan to use. Keep the remaining chocolate in reserve.

Place the bowl of chocolate over the simmering water. The water shouldn't touch the bottom of the bowl. Gently stir the chocolate with a dry rubber spatula, being careful not to let any water get into the melting chocolate.

Once the chocolate has melted, use a **digital thermometer** to check its temperature. Once it reaches 115°F (for dark chocolate) or 110°F (for milk or white chocolate) remove the bowl from over the water.

Add the reserved chopped chocolate to the melted chocolate. Stir while the chocolate melts and the temperature gently lowers to 90°F (for dark chocolate) or 87°F (for milk or white chocolate).

Once the chocolate is tempered, dip your strawberries into the tempered chocolate one at a time. Hold them by the leaves or stem at the top of the berry, then dip to evenly cover the majority of the berry, avoiding the leaves. Gently shake the dipped strawberry to get rid of excess chocolate so it won't puddle as the chocolate sets. Transfer the chocolate covered strawberries to the parchment-lined baking sheet and repeat with the remaining strawberries.