

Beth likes to measure ingredients by weight to ensure accuracy, so don't hesitate to pull out the kitchen scale.

Dark Chocolate Cake with Fresh Strawberry Buttercream

PREP 1 hr., 30 min. BAKE 30 min.

- 1½ cups water
- 3 cups granulated sugar (567 g)
- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour (281 g)
- 1½ cups unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2¼ tsp. baking soda
- 1¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 1¼ tsp. baking powder
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 1½ cups buttermilk, room temperature
- ¾ cup canola oil or olive oil
- 1 recipe Fresh Strawberry Buttercream (right)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease three 8x2-inch round cake pans. Line bottoms of pans with parchment. Grease; set aside. Bring water to boiling.

2. In a very large bowl whisk together sugar, flour, cocoa, baking soda, salt, and baking powder. In a large bowl whisk together eggs, buttermilk, and oil. Add egg mixture to dry ingredients. Using a rubber spatula, stir to combine, scraping down to bottom of bowl to thoroughly combine. Add boiling water; stir just until combined.

3. Divide batter between prepared pans, filling each with 3 cups batter (halfway full). Bake about 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near center(s) comes out clean. Cool in pans on a wire rack 10 minutes. Remove from pans. Cool. Wrap in plastic wrap; chill 1 hour. Frost with Fresh Strawberry Buttercream. Top with strawberries and fresh basil leaves. Makes 16 servings.

Fresh Strawberry Buttercream

In a very large heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water whisk together 8 egg whites (room temperature), 1½ cups sugar, ½ tsp. cream of tartar, and ¼ tsp. salt until sugar dissolves and mixture is 160°F. Remove. Beat with a mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form. Add 6 sticks room temperature butter, 1 Tbsp. at a time, until mixture thickens and becomes smooth. (If it begins to curdle, continue to beat, adding another piece of butter until smooth.) Stir in beans from 1 split vanilla bean, and 2 tsp. vanilla. Stir in 1½ cups strawberries, halved, pureed, and strained through a sieve. Makes 6 cups.

EACH SERVING 739 cal, 47 g fat, 128 mg chol, 478 mg sodium, 77 g carb, 3 g fiber, 8 g pro.

GET BETH'S LOOK Use 2 cups buttercream between layers to give the cake a festive, towering feel.

GO NATURAL
Color your frosting without artificial dyes. BHG.com/CakeWalk