

ATK'S CHOCOLATE-RASPBERRY TORTE

Note: most of my recipes are improvised, but America's Test Kitchen does such a great job with this torte that other than decorating it a bit differently than they do, it's their recipe verbatim. The original recipe can be found here:

<http://www.americastestkitchen.com/recipes/detail.php?docid=26328&&Extcode=N1NSPFA00>

INGREDIENTS

For the cake and filling

8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped fine (see note)
12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon instant espresso powder
1 3/4 cups (about 7 ounces) sliced almonds, lightly toasted
1/4 cup unbleached all-purpose flour (1 1/4 ounces)
1/2 teaspoon table salt
5 large eggs
3/4 cup (5 1/4 ounces) sugar
1/2 cup fresh raspberries, plus 16 individual berries for garnishing cake
1/4 cup seedless raspberry jam

for the chocolate ganache glaze

5 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped fine
1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon heavy cream

INSTRUCTIONS

For the cake: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325F. Line bottom of two 9-inch-wide by 2-inch-high round cake pans with parchment paper. Melt chocolate and butter in large heatproof bowl set over saucepan filled with 1 inch simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes. Stir in vanilla and espresso powder.

Process 3/4 cup almonds in food processor until coarsely chopped, six to eight 1-second pulses; set aside to garnish cake. Process remaining cup almonds until very finely ground, about 45 seconds. Add flour and salt and continue to process until combined, about 15 seconds. Transfer almond-flour mixture to medium bowl. Process eggs in now-empty food processor until lightened in color and almost doubled in volume, about 3 minutes. With processor running, slowly add sugar until thoroughly combined, about 15 seconds. Using whisk, gently fold egg mixture into chocolate mixture until some streaks of egg remain. Sprinkle half almond-flour mixture over chocolate-egg mixture and gently whisk until just combined. Sprinkle in remaining almond-flour mixture and gently whisk until just combined.

Divide batter between cake pans and smooth with rubber spatula. Bake until center is firm and toothpick inserted into center comes out with few moist crumbs attached, 14 to 16 minutes. Transfer cakes to wire rack and cool completely in pan, about 30 minutes. Run paring knife around sides of cakes to loosen. Invert cakes onto cardboard rounds cut same size as diameter of cake and remove parchment paper. Using wire rack, re-invert 1 cake so top side faces up; slide back onto cardboard round.

To assemble the torte: Place 1/2 cup raspberries in medium bowl and coarsely mash with fork. Stir in raspberry jam until just combined. Spread raspberry mixture onto cake layer that is top side up. Top with second cake layer, leaving it bottom side up. Transfer assembled cake, still on cardboard round, to wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet.

For the glaze: Melt chocolate and cream in medium heatproof bowl set over saucepan filled with 1 inch simmering water, stirring occasionally until smooth. Remove from heat and gently whisk until very smooth. Pour glaze onto center of assembled cake. Use offset spatula to spread glaze evenly over top of cake, letting it flow down sides. Spread glaze along sides of cake to coat evenly.

Using fine-mesh strainer, sift reserved almonds to remove any fine bits. Holding bottom of cake on cardboard round with 1 hand, gently press sifted almonds onto cake sides with other hand. Arrange raspberries around circumference.

Refrigerate cake, still on rack, until glaze is set, at least 1 hour and up to 24 hours. Transfer cake to serving platter, slice, and serve.