

Hazelnut Cake with Chocolate Ganache and Nutella Buttercream

This is a triple layer showstopper cake but can easily be scaled down to more of an everyday size. You don't need to cover the whole cake with buttercream just sandwich with Nutella and fresh cream, delicious! If you can't buy ground hazelnuts just whizz up some nuts in the food processor.

Don't be daunted by the Swiss meringue buttercream, it can be a little tricky but well worth the effort.



Serves: 12-14

Time: 4 hours

INGREDIENTS

Cake:

- 375 Salted Butter
- 375g Soft light brown sugar (you can use caster too)
- 6 large eggs
- 300g Self-raising flour
- 120g Ground hazelnuts
- 3tsp Baking powder
- 2tsp Vanilla extract

Swiss Meringue Buttercream:

- 150g Egg whites (see note below)
- 250g Granulated sugar
- 340g Unsalted butter, room temperature
- Pinch of salt
- 3-4 tbs Nutella

NOTE: I use 2 Chicks pasteurised egg whites, its available in the chiller at most large supermarkets, no mess and no wasting the yolks.

Ganache:

- 170ml Double cream
- 150g Dark chocolate

To decorate:

- Ferrero Rocher, Maltesers rolled in gold lustre dust
- 3 x 20cm loose bottomed sponge tins, greased and base lined
- Piping bag and nozzle

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 160C Fan or 180C conventional
2. Cream together the butter and sugar until soft and fluffy
3. Beat in the eggs one at a time until completely combined.
4. Mix together the self-raising flour, ground hazelnuts and baking powder and fold into the mixture.
5. Add the vanilla and a couple of table spoons of hot water or milk and stir.
6. Divide equally between the three tins and bake in the centre of the preheated oven for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean.
7. Leave to cool in the tins for 20 minutes then remove and place on a cooling rack until completely cold.
8. To make the buttercream place the egg whites and sugar in a heatproof bowl over a pan of barely simmering water. Do not let the bottom of the bowl touch the water.
9. Stir occasionally until the sugar has completely dissolved, if you have a sugar thermometer let the egg whites come to a temperature of 65C.
10. Transfer the egg white mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer and whisk until the mixture is completely cold and you have a thick meringue or use a hand held electric whisk. This will probably take about 10 minutes.
11. If using the whisk on your stand mixer transfer to the beater and add the butter a few cubes at a time until all is incorporated. Continue beating until you have a thick and gorgeous buttercream. If you have a sloppy mess

continue beating it will come together. You could pop it in the fridge for 20 minutes then beat it again, trust me it will work.

12. Add Nutella and a pinch of salt and beat well. The buttercream is now ready to use. You can make it a couple of days ahead and store in the fridge, it will firm up so you will need to beat it again to get it to a nice soft consistency.
13. To assemble place one sponge on a cake board or a plate, add a layer of buttercream and top with a second sponge, repeat for the third layer.
14. Spread a thin layer of buttercream over the cake, smooth, pop in the fridge for 20 minutes. This will trap the crumbs and let you get a nice smooth and crumb free top coat. Save the remaining buttercream for decoration
15. Make the ganache by breaking up the chocolate into a bowl, heat the cream in the microwave until just below boiling, pour over the chocolate and stir until all the chocolate has melted.
16. Allow the ganache to cool a little then spoon or use a piping bag to create drips down the side of the cake then spread a layer on the top.
17. Allow the ganache to firm up before piping rosettes of buttercream on the top. If you don't wait the rosettes will slide off the cake.
18. Decorate with the chocolates.