

# CHERRY CHOCOLATE CAKE



## Ingredients

- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder , not dutch processed
- 1 ¼ cup hot water
- 3 cups packed light or dark brown sugar
- 2 ⅔ cup cake flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons unsalted butter , at room temperature
- 3 large eggs
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- ¾ cup coffee , at room temperature
- 8 ounces sweet cherries , pitted and sliced into small pieces
- 1 jar Just Jan's Cherry Spread

## Cherry Vanilla Italian Meringue Buttercream:

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup water
- 4 egg whites
- 2 cups unsalted butter , at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ tablespoon kirsch liquor

## Instructions

### To make the cake:

Preheat oven to 325°F. Butter three 8 or 9-inch cake pans, line them with parchment paper and butter the parchment paper. Add some flour to each pan and roll around until completely coated, pouring out any excess.

Put the cocoa powder in a medium bowl. Add the hot water and stir until smooth. Let cool to room temperature.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, combine the brown sugar, flour, baking soda, and salt. With the mixer on low, blend until combined. Add the butter and dissolved cocoa and beat on medium speed until moistened. Then raise the speed to medium high and beat until light and fluffy, about 2-3 minutes, scraping down the bowl as needed.

In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs with the vanilla and coffee until combined. Add the liquid to the batter in 3 additions, scraping down the side of the bowl often. Fold in the chopped cherries. Divide the batter between the 3 prepared cake pans.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then invert onto wire racks to cool completely.

Place one cake layer on a serving plate or stand. With a pastry bag fitted with a medium plain tip, pipe a small dam of Italian meringue buttercream (recipe follows) around the edge. Spread one third of the cherry spread onto the cake layer. Repeat with the remaining cake layers. Frost the cake with the icing and garnish with cherries.

**To make the filling:**

- Combine cherry spread and ½ cup kirsch or other cherry liquor.

**To make the buttercream:**

- Combine the water and sugar in a saucepan over medium heat. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring occasionally. Once it boils, stop stirring and insert a candy thermometer.
- Meanwhile, whip the egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixture to soft peaks. When the sugar is at 238°F, add it to the egg whites in a slow steady stream with the mixer on medium speed.
- Increase the speed to high and beat until cooled to room temperature.
- Add the butter a few tablespoons at a time, while continuing to mix on medium high speed. Add the vanilla and kirsch. Increase the speed to high and beat until smooth.