

Buena Vista Irish Coffee Cake

Poetry & Pies

prep time: 25-30 minutes

bake time: 25-30 minutes (less if using 3 or more pans)

total time: 1 hour (including making the filling and frosting)

servings: 12-16



Ingredients

for the coffee cake layers

- 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons flour, spooned and leveled then sifted
- 2 teaspoons baking powder, sifted
- ½ teaspoon ground sea salt
- 1 ½ sticks (¾ cup) unsalted European style butter, room temperature
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil (avocado is best, vegetable or canola will do)
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
- ¾ cup whole milk, room temperature
- ¼ cup very, very strong coffee or double shot of espresso (see note)

for the whiskey whipped cream

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons whiskey

for the [coffee whiskey buttercream](#)

- 1 ½ cups (3 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 4-5 cups powdered sugar
- ¼ teaspoon finely ground sea salt (or to taste)
- ½ tablespoon instant coffee or espresso
- ¼ cup whiskey or bourbon
- splash vanilla extract, optional

Instructions

make the coffee cake layers

1. Preheat oven to 325. Lightly grease and flour two or three cake pans (three or four if using 6" pans). Line with parchment paper. Set aside.

Note: *I like to use 3 cake pans to make room for more filling without having to cut the cake in half, which I'm terrible at. If you want to make a 6" cake, you need to use at least 3 pans or they will be overfilled and your cakes won't bake evenly.*

2. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Don't skip sifting the flour and baking powder, as that will drastically affect the texture of the cake. As well, be sure to spoon then level your flour so you don't pack it in. Set aside.
3. In the bowl of your stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or in a large mixing bowl and using hand beaters), beat the butter until smooth. Add the sugars and beat on high until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes, scraping the bowl as needed.
4. Add the eggs one at a time, beating on medium until well blended and scraping the bowl after each egg. Add the oil and vanilla extract and beat on medium until well blended, about 1 minute.
5. Make your strong espresso shot or coffee (see note for using instant coffee or espresso). Add to the milk. You want 1 cup total of coffee/milk, so if you end up with extra, be sure to set that aside for a miniature pick-me-up and don't add it to the batter.
6. Add half of the flour to the butter/egg mixture and beat on low until *just barely* combined. Add the milk/coffee and beat on low until *just barely* combined. Then add the rest of the flour and beat on low until *just barely* combined. Scrape down the bowl then mix on low for 2-3 seconds just to combine all batter.
7. Divide evenly between prepared pans and spread evenly. Bake for 25-30 minutes (less if using 3 or more pans), until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out with a few moist crumbs. Begin checking cake around 15 minutes, and rotate at this time if not using convection. You want to catch it at the sweet spot between raw batter and no crumbs (which means it's overbaked).
8. Let cakes cool in the pan 5-10 minutes then remove to a cooling rack until completely cooled.

make the whiskey whipped cream

9. Combine the heavy cream, powdered sugar, and whiskey in a large, chilled mixing bowl. Whisk gently to combine. Taste, adjusting sugar or whiskey until desired taste is reached (don't add more than another 1-2 tablespoons whiskey or the cream may not whip).
10. Whisk vigorously (or use a hand/stand mixer with the whisk attachment) until stiff peaks begin to form.

make the coffee whiskey buttercream (if not made in advance)

11. Either in the bowl of your stand mixer, fitted with a paddle attachment, or in a large mixing bowl and using a hand mixer, beat butter on high until very smooth, about 30 seconds. Be sure the butter is soft but still matte looking. If it's shiny, it's over-softened and needs to go back in the fridge for a few minutes.
 - *Note: I highly recommend European style butter because it has less water and is creamier.*
12. Add powdered sugar, one cup at a time, beating on low then increasing to high until smooth, about 1 minute. Stop after you've added 4 cups. You can add more at the end, if needed. Scrape the bowl.
13. In a small mixing bowl, combine instant coffee or espresso with one tablespoon of the whiskey. Stir until dissolved and smooth. Pour into the buttercream, scraping bowl to get all the coffee you can. Add the salt and beat on high until very smooth.
14. Taste buttercream. If you'd like a stronger coffee taste, stir a little more instant coffee with another tablespoon of whiskey and beat into the buttercream (it was pretty coffee-forward with just 1/2 tablespoon). Otherwise, add the remainder of the whiskey straight into the buttercream (or to taste). If you don't want any more of a whiskey taste but need to smooth out the frosting, you can add a splash or two of heavy whipping cream instead. You can also add a splash of vanilla extract at this point if you want, but I left it out to let the coffee and whiskey shine. Beat on high until well blended.
15. Scrape the bowl and taste again, adding the last cup of powdered sugar or a splash more whiskey, as needed. Don't overdo it on the whiskey, though. It can cause the buttercream to break. If you want a more intense flavor, you can leave the buttercream in the fridge for a few days.

16. Beat on high for about a minute, to fluff up the frosting. Then stir vigorously with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula for another minute to release the air bubbles.

assemble your cake

17. If you made the buttercream ahead of time, you may need to stir or beat it for a minute to make it pliable. Fill the cake by spreading a thin layer of buttercream on the bottom cake layer. Build a ring of buttercream around the edge using a piping bag or plastic baggie with a corner cut off. Fill with whiskey whipped cream.
18. If your house is warm, it may be easiest to frost the top of the next layer of cake while it's on the cooling rack then transfer it with a large spatula or cake lifter. That way you don't cause the layers to separate as you spread buttercream on the upper layers.
19. Once all layers are added, frost a thin crumb coat of buttercream then chill for at least 20 minutes to set. Frost with desired amount of buttercream (I used almost all of it--so good!). Chill until set.

Enjoy! Keep cake refrigerated until 30 minutes before serving. Alternatively, I found it easiest to cut it while chilled then let each slice warm up for 10 minutes on the counter. Store leftovers in the fridge, placing a piece of plastic directly against any cut edges then covering the whole thing with plastic wrap or storing in an airtight cake holder. Leftovers will last 3-5 days in the fridge.