

Malted Milk Chocolate Robin's Egg Cake

Poetry & Pies

prep time: 25-30 minutes

bake time: 25-30 minutes

decorating time: 15-20 minutes

total time: 1 hour, 20 minutes (plus time for the cakes to cool*)

servings: 12-16 (this recipe was enough to make both cakes--one 6" and one 4"--in the photos)



Ingredients

for the malted milk chocolate cake layers

- 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups (335g) sugar
- 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups (238g) flour, sifted**
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (65g) unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 1 cup (112g) malted milk powder***
- 2 teaspoons (10g) baking powder, sifted
- 1 teaspoon (5g) baking soda, sifted
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon (3g) sea salt (or 1 teaspoon table salt)
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup (240g) buttermilk, room temperature****
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (106g) avocado oil (can sub vegetable or canola oil)
- 1 tablespoon (14g) vanilla extract
- 1 cup (236g) hot, light roast coffee (or hot water)

for the vanilla malt buttercream

- 2 cups (454g) unsalted European style butter, softened
- $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (56-75g) malted milk powder (to taste)
- 5-6 cups (650-780g) powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon (13g) pure vanilla extract
- gel food dye (sky blue and lemon yellow were used here)
- 2-4 tablespoons (28-56g) heavy whipping cream (optional)
- pinch sea salt (optional--use only if needed)

for the malted milk chocolate filling

- 1 cup vanilla malt buttercream

- 1-2 tablespoons (7-14g) unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted

to decorate

- large handful flaked coconut (sweetened or unsweetened)
- 1 tablespoon (7g) cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon (4g) vanilla extract
- ¼ cup mini Robin Egg candies

Instructions

make the malted milk chocolate cake layers

1. Preheat oven to 325. Prepare two 8" or 9" cake pans by greasing lightly with butter and flour or using baking spray. Line with parchment paper. (You can also use three or four 6" pans or even three 8" or 9" pans to make room for extra filling).
2. In the bowl of your stand mixer (or a large mixing bowl), whisk together the sugar, flour, cocoa, malted milk powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt, sifting as directed. Set aside.
3. In a medium to large mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs, buttermilk, oil, and vanilla extract until well-blended, about 30 seconds. (I like to make my coffee at this point so it's very fresh.) Very slowly stream the hot coffee into the egg mixture, whisking vigorously as you go so you don't scramble the eggs. Do this in segments if needed so you can whisk well.
4. With the paddle attachment (or a hand mixer) on low, slowly pour the wet ingredients into the dry. This should take at least 30 seconds, and the batter will clump up then thin out.
5. Once all the wet ingredients are added, immediately turn off the mixer. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl. Beat on medium for exactly 2 minutes (set a timer).
6. Divide batter evenly between prepared pans. Firmly tap each pan on the counter twice to release the larger air bubbles. Bake for 25-30 minutes (less if using more than two pans), until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out with a few moist crumbs (avoid waiting until it comes out perfectly clean--that usually means it's over baked). Check early, as bake times vary by oven and climate. Rotate pans halfway if not using convection.

7. Let cakes cool in the pan 5-10 minutes then remove to a cooling rack until completely cool. See note about using the freezer to speed up the cooling process*.

make the vanilla malt buttercream

optional: you can also make the buttercream ahead of time and let it come to room temperature on the counter for 1-2 hours while you make the cake layers

8. While the cakes cool, make the buttercream. In the bowl of your stand mixer, beat butter on high until smooth, about 30 seconds. Add in ½ cup of the malted milk powder and beat on high until light and fluffy, 1-2 minutes, scraping the bowl as needed.
9. Scrape the bowl with a rubber spatula. Add in powdered sugar, one cup at a time, beating on low then increasing speed to high for 1 minute, until smooth. Scrape the bowl as needed. Taste as you go and only add as much powdered sugar as needed. Add in the vanilla extract and beat until smooth.
10. Taste, adding in more malt powder or powdered sugar, to taste, and beat well before proceeding. Only add in salt if it truly needs it for flavor, as the malt powder has sodium. If it's too thick, add in heavy whipping cream, one tablespoon at a time, until spreadable. Don't worry if it's grainy--the next few steps will help with that. Don't add too much cream, as it's impossible to recover from making it too loose.
11. Remove about 1 cup (or about ⅓ of the frosting) to a separate bowl, to make the malted milk chocolate filling.
12. Add in 2-3 drops gel food coloring (start small and add more as desired). For an Easter-y, robin's egg blue, use 2-3 drops sky blue by Americolor or Wilton. Refrigeration will help deepen the color, if desired.
13. Once the flavor is well-balanced and the color to your liking, scrape the bowl well then beat on high for 3-5 minutes, stopping once to scrape down the bowl. This will smooth it out quite a bit. Stir vigorously for a minute to release the air bubbles.

Note: if, after beating for 5 minutes and adding some heavy whipping cream, it's still too grainy, you can refrigerate it for a few hours or overnight. This helps smooth out most frostings. Just remember to let it come to room temperature on the counter then stir well.

make the malted milk chocolate buttercream

14. To the buttercream you reserved, add 1-2 tablespoons cocoa powder and stir well or beat with a hand mixer until smooth. Taste, adding more cocoa as desired.

assemble and decorate

15. While the cake is chilling, or when ready to assemble, toast the coconut flakes by spreading in a thin layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 350 for 10 minutes, gently shaking the pan to toss the coconut halfway through. Watch carefully, as coconut will burn quickly. Let cool while you frost the cake.

16. Remove any domed cake tops with a serrated knife. Fill the cake with the malted milk chocolate buttercream. (Pro tip: if you cut off domed tops, place that face-down so you are spreading frosting onto the bottom side of the cake, which will not create as many crumbs.)

17. Spread a thin coat of the dyed vanilla malt buttercream on the top and sides of the cake. Chill for at least 10 minutes, until the crumb coat is stiff to the touch. Spread the remaining frosting (or desired amount) on the cake, getting it as straight as possible (going slowly and using a cake turner helps). Chill until the frosting is firm.

18. Make the robin egg spackle by mixing the cocoa powder and vanilla extract until a thin consistency.

19. Using a pastry brush or clean paint brush (I use cake paint brushes), splatter the cocoa onto the cake by holding the brush a few inches from the cake and running your finger over the bristles and away from the cake. It can help to practice this by splattering it into the sink a couple times to get a feel for it. Spackle until your desired look is achieved.

20. Once spackled, create your egg nest by spreading a teaspoon of toasted (and cooled) coconut in the center of the cake. Create a hole in the middle with your finger. Keep adding small amounts and re-forming that middle hole each time, which will help build up rounded edges for the nest. Once you are happy with how big the nest is, fill with mini Robin Eggs candies.

Enjoy!

Leftovers should be stored with a piece of plastic wrap directly touching and covering all cut edges then the entire cake should be covered well in plastic wrap or placed in an airtight container. Cake will last for 3-5 days.

Notes:

**You can speed up the whole process by placing the cakes in the freezer after they've cooled in the pans for 5-10 minutes. I recommend making the frostings while the cakes cool/chill to save time.*

***Always spoon then level your flour so you do not pack it in.*

****You can use chocolate malt powder, but the combination of that and the cocoa might drown out the malt flavor.*

*****You can make your own buttermilk by placing 1 tablespoon white vinegar in a 1-cup measuring cup then adding enough milk to equal 1 cup. Stir and let sit 5-10 minutes.*