



CHOCOLATE AND PEANUT BUTTER CARAMEL EXPLOSION CAKE

Sarah Hadland

INGREDIENTS

SPONGE

- 265g self-raising flour
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 300g caster sugar
- 150g light brown sugar
- 100g unsalted butter
- 75g cocoa powder
- 125ml boiling water
- 100g buttermilk or plain yogurt
- 100g flavourless oil (sunflower e.g.)
- 2tsp vanilla extract
- 5 large eggs

PEANUT BUTTER CARAMEL

- 75g unsalted butter
- 75g dark brown sugar
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 200g chunky peanut butter
- ½ tsp sea salt

BUTTERCREAM

- 250g icing sugar
- 4 large egg whites
- ¼ tsp cream of tartar
- Pinch of salt
- 450g unsalted butter
- 2 heaped dessert spoons of smooth Biscoff (optional)

GANACHE

- 200g dark chocolate
- 200g double cream

TO DECORATE

- Freddo bars
- M&S extremely chocolatey rounds

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METHOD

FOR THE CAKES

- Grease and line the bottom and sides of 2 8" cake tins (you can use 3, but the cooking time will change). Preheat the oven to 180°C fan.
- Start by adding the cocoa powder, butter and vanilla extract together in a heat-proof bowl. Gently whisk in the boiling water and stir until completely combined. Add the oil and buttermilk and mix well. Finally, add the eggs and whisk together, ensuring there are no lumps.
- In a large bowl (or a stand mixer if you have one), add the flour, baking powder, salt and sugars. Mix this all together ensuring everything is incorporated.
- Slowly add the wet chocolate mix in 3 parts, ensuring everything is completely combined, using a spatula to get the last of the lumps off of the bottom.
- Split the mix equally between your tins and bake in the centre of the oven for 30-35 mins for 2 tins, or 25-30 mins for 3 tins.
- Cool the cakes in their tins for 5-10 mins before carefully turning out onto a wire rack to cool completely to room temperature.

FOR THE CARAMEL

- Add the sugar and butter to a heavy based saucepan and melt over a medium heat for a couple of minutes until melted and combined, stirring all the time.
- Add the condensed milk to the pan and increase the heat to medium and switch to a whisk. Whisk the mix over the heat until it bubbles and continue to cook for 1-2 minutes until the mix starts to resemble melted toffee.
- Remove the toffee sauce from the heat and add the vanilla and peanut butter, stirring well. Set this aside until needed.
- Reserve a few tablespoons of the caramel (without the peanut butter) to decorate with.

FOR THE BUTTERCREAM

- Add the icing sugar and egg whites to a heatproof bowl and place over a Bain Marie, whisking constantly. Heat the eggs and sugar to 71°C (160°F) ensuring there are no grains of sugar left.
- Transfer this mix to the bowl of a stand mixer whisk attachment that has been cleaned and rubbed with lemon juice. Whisk on high until the meringue has cooled to room temperature (about 15 minutes).
- Switch to a paddle attachment and with the speed on medium high, slowly add cubes of room temperature butter until it has been entirely combined. Continue mixing until the buttercream has come together.
- Add the Biscoff and keep mixing until incorporated and set aside until needed.

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FOR THE GANACHE

- Add the cream and the chocolate to a heatproof bowl and microwave in 30 second bursts until everything has melted. Stir in between each blast and continue stirring until it's smooth and silky.

TO ASSEMBLE

- Cut your sponges horizontally (not necessary if you made 3) and add a dollop of the buttercream to the cake board or plate you will present your cake on. Place the bottom layer of the cake on the board or plate.
- Load ½ of the buttercream into a piping bag with a star nozzle. Pipe a wall of buttercream around the edge of the sponge base.
- Take 1/3 of your peanut butter caramel and spread it in the centre of the sponge up to the buttercream wall. Crumble over 2-3 chocolatey rounds if you wish. Place the next layer of sponge on top and repeat this process until all the sponges have been layered.
- Take the remaining half of the buttercream (not in the piping bag) and use a palette knife to smooth this over the finished cake. You may wish to do a crumb coat and refrigerate before adding the final layer.
- Take the now room temperature ganache and drip this over the sides of the cake and fill in the middle.
- Use the remaining buttercream in the piping bag to add rosettes to the top of the cake and drizzle over the reserved caramel.
- Adorn each buttercream rosette with an extremely chocolatey round and stick your freddo bars to the base of the cake – serve with tea and friends.