

From Season 6 | "Weekends with Yankee" Episode 601: Classic New England

The Ocean House's Parisian Opera Torte

Yankee Magazine · March 31, 2022 · Add Comment



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Photo: Amy Traverso

The Ocean House's Parisian Opera Torte

For "Classic New England" (season 6, episode 1), *Weekends with Yankee* traveled to Charlestown, Rhode Island, to visit the original location of Dave's Coffee, an artisan coffee roaster. Afterward, Amy brought a bottle of Dave's coffee syrup to the renowned Ocean House, where she joined the executive pastry chef to bake this classic opera cake made with layers of coffee syrup-infused almond sponge, coffee buttercream, and chocolate ganache.

Yield: 8 servings

For the Almond Sponge (joconde)

Ingredients

- 1 3/4 cups (190g) almond flour
- 1 1/2 cups (190g) powdered sugar
- 1/3 cup (50g) all-purpose flour
- Pinch salt
- 5 large eggs, at room temperature
- 2 egg whites, at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons (25 g) granulated sugar
- 2 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350° and set a rack to the middle position. Line an 18- by 13-inch rimmed sheet pan (also called a half sheet pan) with parchment paper and set aside.

Sift the almond flour, powdered sugar, all-purpose flour, and salt into the bowl of a stand mixer (or a large bowl). Add the 5 whole eggs and use the whisk attachment (or a hand mixer) to whip the mixture on medium speed until very fluffy, 4 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl.

Thoroughly clean your bowl and whisk attachment (or the beaters of your hand mixer) so that not a speck of batter remains. Beat the 2 egg whites in this bowl on high speed until frothy. With the mixer going, slowly add the granulated sugar to make a meringue. Whip until the mixture forms stiff peaks.

Gently fold half the meringue into the batter until no streaks remain. Repeat with remaining meringue. Fold in melted butter.

Pour the batter into the prepared sheet pan and use an offset spatula to spread into an even layer. Bake until just set and very pale in color, 9 to 12 minutes. Let cool to room temperature. Yields: 1 sheet, enough for 3 layers

For the Coating Chocolate and Coffee Simple Syrup

Ingredients

- 3/4 pound (12 ounces) semi-sweet chocolate, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons coffee extract or very strong coffee

Instructions

For the Coating Chocolate: In a small saucepan, melt the chocolate with the vegetable oil over low heat. Stir until smooth.

For the Coffee Simple Syrup: In a small saucepan, simmer the sugar and water until the sugar is completely dissolved. Add coffee extract.

For the Swiss Buttercream and Chocolate Ganache

Ingredients

- 4 large egg whites, at room temperature
- 3/4 cups granulated sugar
- 3 sticks unsalted butter, cut into quarters, softened
- 1 1/2 tablespoons coffee extract
- 5 ounces (150g) semi-sweet chocolate, roughly chopped
- 3/4 cup heavy cream

Instructions

For the Swiss Buttercream: Set a double boiler over medium-high heat and put egg whites and sugar in the bowl. As water comes to a boil, use a hand mixer to beat egg white mixture on medium-high speed. Continue beating until meringue forms stiff peaks. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Add butter, one piece at a time, beating on medium speed, then add coffee extract and beat until mixture is smooth and fluffy.

For the Chocolate Ganache: In a small saucepan, heat the cream until it just begins to steam, then remove from heat and add the chopped chocolate. Stir until smooth. Let cool until barely warm. It will seem very liquidy but it will thicken as it cools.

TO ASSEMBLE

Set the cake in the pan with one of the long sides facing you. To cut the cake into three equal-sized rectangles, first use a ruler and a knife to mark the long side of the cake every 5 1/4 inches. This is where you'll cut the cake using your ruler as a guide. You'll have a bit of extra cake at the end, which you can trim and snack on. Do not remove the rectangles yet.

Take some of the coating chocolate (warm it up a bit if it has hardened) and use an offset spatula to spread a thin layer across the left-most rectangle. This will be the bottom of your torte. Take 1/4 cup of this chocolate and set it aside for decorating at the end. Transfer the pan to the freezer to chill for 10 minutes.

Cut the chocolate-coated cake layer out of the pan by running a knife along the edges of the pan and down through the parchment paper. Lift the layer out, flip it onto a cutting board, chocolate-side-down, and pull off the parchment paper. Pour enough coffee simple syrup over this layer to soak it through.

Take half of the buttercream and spread it in an even layer of buttercream over the layer, being careful to keep the edges as clean as possible.

Cut another layer of sponge out of the pan as you did before, and flip it atop the buttercream. Press down lightly, then remove the parchment paper. Soak with simple syrup as above.

Spread chocolate ganache evenly over the layer. Transfer the cake to the refrigerator to chill and firm up for 15 minutes.

Set the third sponge layer onto the chocolate ganache as above. Saturate with coffee simple syrup as before. Top with an even layer of buttercream.

Return the cake to the refrigerator to chill for 30 minutes. When the cake is chilled and solid, gently warm the coating chocolate and pour it over top of the torte. Don't worry about covering the sides.

Chill the cake until the chocolate is set, 15 minutes. Use a warm knife to trim the edges of the torte so that you can see the neat, even layers. Take the 1/4 cup of coating chocolate that you set aside earlier and use it to pipe "Opera" on top of the torte. You can also decorate with gold leaf, if desired. Cut into slices and serve.

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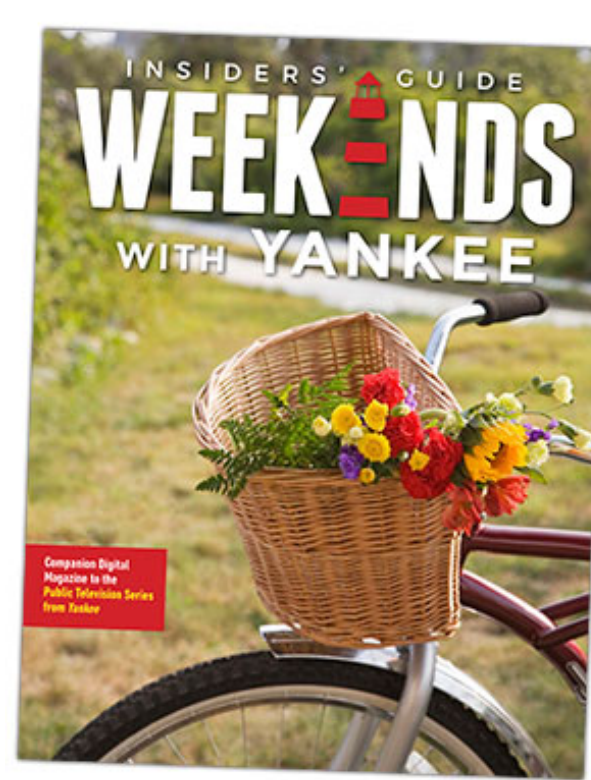
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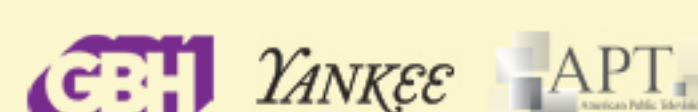
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