

BUCHE DE NOEL
(Christmas Yule Log)

CHOCOLATE GENOISE SHEET CAKE

3 large eggs
3 large egg yolks
Pinch salt
¾ cup sugar
1/3 cup cake flour (spoon flour into dry measure cup and level off)
1/3 cup cornstarch
¼ cup Dutch process cocoa

COFFEE BUTTERCREAM

4 large egg whites
1 cup sugar
24 tbsp. (3 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
2 tbsp. instant espresso powder
2 tbsp. rum or brandy

FOR FINISHING:

Cocoa powder
Meringue Mushrooms (recipe follows)
Confectioner's sugar

For the Genoise:

1. Set oven rack in middle of oven and preheat to 400F. Butter and line a 10x15 inch jelly roll pan with parchment paper.
2. Half fill a medium saucepan with water and bring it to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat so water is simmering. Whisk the eggs, yolks, salt and sugar together in the bowl of a mixer. Place over the pan of simmering water and whisk gently until the mixture is just lukewarm, about 100 degrees (test with your finger). Attach the bowl to the mixer and with the whisk attachment, whip on medium high speed until the egg mixture is cooled (touch the outside of the bowl to tell) and tripled in volume.
3. In a small bowl stir together the flour, cornstarch and cocoa.
4. Sift 1/3 of the flour mixture over the beaten eggs. Use a rubber spatula to fold in the flour mixture, making sure to scrape all the way to the bottom of the bowl on every pass through the batter to prevent the flour mixture from accumulating there and making lumps. Repeat with another 1/3 of the flour mixture and finally with the remainder.
5. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. Bake the genoise for about 10-12 minutes, or until well risen and firm to the touch. (make sure the cake doesn't overbake and become too dry or it will be hard to roll). Using a small paring

knife loosen the cake from the sides of the pan. Invert the cake onto a rack and let the cake cool on the paper. Remove the paper when the cake is cool.

For the Chocolate Buttercream:

1. Whisk the egg whites and sugar together in the bowl of an electric mixer. Set the bowl over simmering water and whisk gently until the sugar is dissolved and the egg whites are hot. Attach the bowl to the mixer and whip with the whisk on medium speed until cooled. Switch to the paddle and beat in the softened butter and continue beating until the buttercream is smooth. Dissolve the instant coffee in the liquor and beat into the buttercream.

To Assemble the Cake:

1. Invert the cake onto a fresh piece of parchment paper. Spread the layer with half the buttercream. Use the paper to help you roll the cake into a tight cylinder. Transfer to a baking sheet, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or until set. Reserve the remaining buttercream for the outside of the buche.

2. Unwrap the cake. Trim the ends on the diagonal, starting the cuts about 2 inches away from each end. Position the larger cup piece on the buche about 2/3 across the top to form a stump. Cover the buche with the reserved buttercream, making sure to curve around the protruding stump. Streak the buttercream with a fork or decorating comb to resemble bark. Transfer the buche to a platter and decorate with the meringue mushrooms. Sprinkle the platter and buche sparingly with confectioners' sugar to resemble snow. Keep at cool room temperature.

Serves 12

MERINGUE MUSHROOMS

4 large egg whites

¼ tsp. cream of tartar

1 cup sugar (preferably superfine)

2 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, cut into small pieces

2 tsp. unsweetened cocoa for dusting

1. Combine egg whites with cream of tartar in bowl of an electric mixer. Beat on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually sprinkle in sugar, beating at high speed until mixture is very stiff and dull looking.

2. Scrape meringue mixture into pastry bag. Pipe round, button shapes to make mushroom caps. Pipe pointed shapes about 1 inch tall to make stems. Bake 2 hours in 200F oven until crisp and completely dry.

3. Assemble the mushrooms: Place chocolate in a small microwaveable bowl. Microwave until melted. Spread a little melted chocolate on the flat side of each meringue mushroom cap. Use a sharp knife to cut off and discard the pointed ends of meringue stems. Attach stems to caps while chocolate is still soft. Set assembled

mushrooms aside until the chocolate has dried and caps and stems are glued together.

Dust mushrooms with cocoa powder. Meringue mushrooms may be made 3-4 weeks in advance and stored in an airtight container.