

Ultimate Flourless Chocolate Cake

8 Large Eggs

1 pound Ghiradelli's bittersweet chocolate (yes, it does make a difference in this recipe; look for G.'s "Double Chocolate" baking chips)

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch chunks

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Amaretto Liqueur (may also use strong coffee or other Liqueur)

Confectioners' sugar or cocoa powder for decoration

Yield: 12 to 16 slices

Adjust oven rack to lower middle position and heat oven to 325°. Line bottom of 8 - 9 inch springform pan with parchment and grease pan sides. Cover pan underneath and along sides with sheet of heavy-duty foil and set in large roasting pan. Bring kettle of water to boil.

Begin melting chocolate and butter (adding liqueur or coffee, if using) in a large heat-proof bowl set over pan of almost simmering water, until smooth and very warm (about 115° on an instant-read thermometer), stirring once or twice. For the micro wave, melt chocolate butter together at 50% power until smooth and warm, 4 to 6 minutes, stirring once or twice.)

While chocolate is melting, beat eggs with hand-held mixer at high speed until volume doubles to approximately 1 quart, about 5 minutes. Alternately, beat in bowl of electric mixer fitted with wire whip attachment at medium speed (speed 6 on a Kitchen Aid) to achieve same result, about 5 minutes.

Fold $\frac{1}{3}$ of egg foam into chocolate mixture using large rubber spatula until only a few streaks of egg are visible; fold in half of remaining foam, then last of remaining foam, until mixture is totally homogenous.

Scrape batter into prepared springform pan and smooth surface with rubber spatula. Set roasting pan containing spring form pan on oven rack and pour enough boiling water in roasting pan, outside of springform pan to come about halfway up side of springform pan. Bake until cake has risen slightly, edges are just beginning to set, a thin glazed crust (like a brownie) has formed on surface, and an instant read thermometer inserted halfway through center of cake registers 140°.*

Aproximate timing is:

22 - 25 minutes for an 8-inch pan

20 - 23 minutes for an 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pan

18 - 20 minutes for a 9-inch pan

Remove cake pan from water bath and set on wire rack; cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate overnight to mellow (can be covered and refrigerated for up to 4 days).

About 30 minutes before serving, remove springform pan sides, invert cake on sheet of waxed paper, peel off parchment pan liner, and then turn cake right side up on serving platter. Before or after serving slices onto individual plates, sieve light sprinkling of Confectioners' sugar or unsweetened cocoa powder over cake to decorate, if desired.

*With this dessert, temperature is a more sure proof of doneness than timing. Even though the cake may not look done, pull it from the oven when an instant-read thermometer registers 140°F. Make sure not to let tip of thermometer hit bottom of the pan. Cake will continue to hold the 140° temperature for at least 5 minutes (thus killing any possibility of salmonella from the eggs), as well as firm up as it cools.