

Pennsylvania-Dutch Chocolate Cake

2 cups all-purpose flour, scooped into measuring cup and leveled off with a knife
2 cups sugar
16 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 large eggs
1½ cups buttermilk
1 cup good-quality cocoa
2 ounces melted semisweet chocolate
½ teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons baking soda
½ cup hot water
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Have the eggs, buttermilk, and butter at room temperature. Prepare two 9-inch by 2-inch-deep cake pans. Butter the pans thoroughly. Cut 2 rounds of waxed paper to fit the bottom of the pans, and butter the top side of the waxed paper. Preheat oven to 350°.

In a large bowl, whisk together thoroughly the flour, cocoa, baking powder, and the salt. Dissolve the baking soda in ½ cup of hot water.

In a stand mixer, cream the softened butter. Gradually add the sugar to the butter in a small even stream while continuing to beat. Increase the mixer speed until the creamed butter and sugar are very fluffy.

Add one egg at a time, beating after each addition. Beat in the melted chocolate until well combined.

With the mixer at a very low speed, add 1 cup of the dry ingredients. Mix until well blended. Stir the vanilla into the buttermilk. Add about ⅓ cup of buttermilk and continue to beat until well blended. Alternately add the remaining dry ingredients and the buttermilk, ending with the dry ingredients.

Pour in the baking soda dissolved in the water. Raise the mixer speed slightly and beat until the batter is thoroughly homogenized.

Pour equal amounts into the prepared cake pans. Bake in the center of the preheated 350° oven for 35-40 minutes, just until a cake tester comes out clean. Begin testing at the 30-minute mark. Over-baked cakes are dry. Place the cake pans on a rack to cool for 15 minutes. Invert the cakes and very gently peel off the waxed paper. The cakes are very delicate until cooled and need careful handling.

Frost with your favorite icing.