

## Black Forest Cake

### For the Cake

6 eggs  
1 cup superfine sugar  
1 cup cake flour  
½ cup cocoa  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
6 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 teaspoon salt

### For the Filling

24-ounce jar sour cherries  
⅓ cup sugar  
2 tablespoons cornstarch  
2 tablespoons kirsch

### For the Syrup

½ cup sugar  
½ cup cold water  
¼ cup kirsch

### For the Topping

3 cups heavy cream  
½ cup confectioners' sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
2 tablespoons instant vanilla pudding  
6 ounces semisweet chocolate  
Maraschino cherries

### Making the Chocolate Curls

Slightly warm the chocolate, not letting it melt at all. With a vegetable peeler shave curls across the long edge of the chocolate. Refrigerate until ready to use.

### Making the Cake

Lightly butter only the sides of a 9-inch cake pan. Line the bottom and the sides with parchment paper. Preheat the oven to 350°.

Sift the cake flour into the measuring cup, then level off the top with the back of a knife. Resift the cake flour and the cocoa. Whisk together the dry ingredients until well combined.

Lightly beat the eggs, sugar, vanilla, and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer. Place the bowl over simmering water, stirring until a thermometer reaches 100° to 104°.

Immediately begin beating the egg mixture at high speed with the whip attachment. Continue beating for 10-12 minutes until the mixture is at least tripled in bulk. The batter should create a slowly dissolving ribbon when the beater is lifted from the mixture. It should also be firm enough to allow an inserted toothpick to stand on end. Then lower the speed to medium and beat another minute or so. Finally, turn down the speed to low and beat another minute until a smooth creamy texture is obtained.

Sift half the flour mixture over the egg mixture, and gently, but quickly begin folding in the flour with a spatula. When it is incorporated, sift on the remaining flour and fold quickly until it disappears into the egg mixture. Do not over mix, or you will deflate the egg mixture.

While you are folding in the flour, heat the butter in a small saucepan until it is melted and reaches a temperature of 140°. Scoop about 1 cup of the batter into the butter and mix thoroughly. Then quickly, but gently, fold the butter mixture into the batter. Carefully scoop the batter into the cake pan. Stir the batter gently a couple times with chopstick or other implement. Lift the pan 6 inches over the counter and drop the pan to shock the batter and remove excess air.

Bake in the middle of the oven for about 35 minutes until a cake tester comes out clean. Again, hold the baked cake 6-inches over the counter and drop it, shocking the cake once more to remove any final air. Cool on a rack for 10 minutes, and invert the cake onto the rack, peeling off the parchment paper. After 5 minutes, turn the cake right-side-up and allow to cool thoroughly.

### **Making the Syrup**

Combine the sugar and cold water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring only until the sugar is dissolved. Continue boiling for 5 minutes. Let the syrup cool, then stir in the kirsch.

### **Making the Filling**

Drain the cherries in a sieve held over a medium saucepan. In a small bowl dissolve the cornstarch with a few tablespoons of the cherry juice. Stir the sugar into the juice in the saucepan and bring to a boil. Whisk in the cornstarch mixture and cook until the mixture is thick and somewhat clear. Cool the mixture, then stir in the kirsch, and finally the drained cherries.

### **Making the Topping**

Sift together the confectioners' sugar and the instant pudding. Pour the heavy cream into a chilled bowl and begin to beat with a chilled beater. When the cream just begins to develop soft peaks, add the vanilla and one half of the sugar mixture. Beat a bit longer, then add the remaining sugar mixture. Beat until the cream has become thick. Chill until ready to frost the cake.

### **Assembling the Cake**

Cut the cake into three layers. Brush each layer with the kirsch syrup. Place the top layer of the cake top-side-down on a serving plate. Spoon a one-inch thick ring of cream around the perimeter of the slice. Spoon half the cherry filling in the middle of the ring created by the cream. Spread a bit more cream over the top of the cherries. Place the middle layer of the cake on top, and repeat the same procedure with more cream and the rest of the cherries. Place the final layer bottom-side-up on the top of the cake.

Spread the remainder of the cream on the top and sides of the cake, smoothing it out with a palette knife or spatula.

For the garnish, dry some maraschino cherries in paper towels. Place them decoratively on the top of the cake. Gently press the chocolate curls onto the sides and top of the cake with cold fingers. Chill for three to four hours before serving.

