

World's Best Chocolate Tunnel-of-Fudge Cake

Serves 12 (makes 1 cake or 12 mini-Bundt cakes)

Ingredients:

<i>2 ½ cups roasted walnuts or walnuts and pecans, chopped (½ & ½ is best)</i>	<i>1/2 cup vegetable oil</i>
<i>2 tablespoons butter</i>	<i>2 large egg yolks</i>
<i>1/8 teaspoon salt</i>	<i>4 large eggs</i>
<i>Nonstick cooking spray</i>	<i>2 cups (8.8 ounces) confectioners' (powdered) sugar</i>
<i>1 ¾ cups cold butter (14 ounces), cut into tablespoon-size pieces</i>	<i>2 ¼ cups bleached all-purpose flour</i>
<i>1 cup granulated sugar</i>	<i>¾ cup natural cocoa powder (not Dutch cocoa)</i>
<i>¾ cup dark brown sugar, packed</i>	<i>½ teaspoon salt</i>
<i>1 teaspoon vanilla</i>	

Time: 2 hours plus 2-4 hours to cool.

1. Place a heavy baking sheet or pizza stone on a shelf in the lower third of the oven. Heat the oven to 350°
2. On a large baking sheet, roast nuts in the oven for 10 minutes. Keep watch that they do not burn. Pour into a bowl, and add butter and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Toss well and set aside.
3. Generously apply nonstick cooking spray to the inside of a large Bundt cake pan.
4. In a mixer, beat butter to soften until it becomes fluffy. Add sugar, then the brown sugar and continue to beat until airy. While beating, if the bowl does not feel cool, place it in the freezer for five minutes, then resume beating.
5. Beat in ½ teaspoon salt, vanilla and vegetable oil.
6. Beat in two egg yolks. Crack the four whole eggs into a large mixing bowl. With a small knife, cut yolks and barely stir the eggs, minimally blending the whites and yolks.
7. With a mixer on the lowest speed, beat the eggs into the batter in three batches. Mix in confectioners' (powdered) sugar and the cocoa.
8. In a large mixing bowl, stir flour and nuts together. Then with a spatula stir the flour-nut mixture into the batter. Pour the batter into the Bundt pan.
9. Bake for 45 minutes (23 minutes for mini-Bundt cakes). You cannot use the toothpick test because the cake contains so much sugar that the centre will not set but will remain a tunnel-of-fudge. You are dependent on a correct oven temperature and the cooking time.
10. When removed from the oven, the cake(s) will have a runny fudge core with an air pocket above the fudge. About 30 minutes after taking the cake(s) out of the oven, press the inside and outside edge of the cake(s) bottom down all the way around to minimize the air pocket. Let the cake, still in the pan(s), cool on a rack for two to three hours. Invert the cake(s) onto a platter and let cool completely.

A recipe from Shirley O. Corriher appearing in the December 28, 2004 issue of the New York Times