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OF FRANKENMUTH

SNOWFEST

# All Things Chocolate Baking Contest

Wednesday, January 24, 2024





*Cakes*

## **Chai Lavender Tea-licious Flourless Chocolate Cake** (Gluten Free)

12 oz bag (2 cups) of semi-sweet chocolate chips  
4 sticks (1lb, 2 cups) butter  
¼ cup cocoa  
1½ cups Pioneer sugar  
1 cup lavender tea (1 teaspoon dried lavender buds in 1 cup hot water, or made with a commercial lavender tea bag according to package directions)  
8 eggs  
4 teaspoons chai seasoning\* (recipe follows to make your own)  
Whipped cream

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare a 9 inch round baking pan with 3-inch sides by greasing and lining the bottom of the pan with parchment paper. In microwave or stovetop on low heat stirring constantly, melt butter and chocolate chips mixing until smooth. Mix in cocoa, Pioneer sugar and lavender tea until blended. Let cool so as not to "cook" the eggs. When cooled add eggs and chai seasoning, mixing until smooth, do not whip. Pour mixture into prepared pan, batter will be very thin. Place the pan with the batter into a larger pan in the oven. Fill this larger pan with boiling water halfway up the sides. Bake cake for 45-50 minutes until it is set in center. Cool completely. Loosen the cake from the sides of the pan and turn it out onto a serving plate, cover, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Top with whipped cream and serve.

### \* Chai Spice

1 tablespoon ground cardamon  
1 tablespoon ground cloves  
¾ teaspoon fresh ground black pepper  
¾ teaspoon fennel seeds  
1 - 3" stick of cinnamon broken up  
2 teaspoons ginger powder  
1 teaspoon fresh grated nutmeg (½ pod)

Grind all ingredients in a spice or coffee grinder to a fine powder.

***Mary Yelland, North Branch, MI***



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## **CHOCOLATE AND RASPBERRY CAKE**

### **CHOCOLATE CAKE**

#### **Ingredients:**

All-purpose flour: 300g  
Baking powder: 2.5tsp  
Baking soda: 0.75tsp  
Unsalted butter: 130g, cool room temp  
Pioneer Granulated sugar: 200g  
Light brown sugar: 200g  
Oil: 85g  
Eggs: 3, room temp  
Egg yolk: 1, room temp  
Vanilla Extract: 1 tsp  
Kosher salt: 1.5 tsp  
Semisweet chocolate: 150g, chopped into small pieces  
Brewed coffee: 2/3 cup (1.25 tsp espresso powder dissolved in 2/3 cup of boiling water)  
Cocoa powder: 40g  
Buttermilk: 160g

#### **Method:**

- 1) Preheat oven to 350F.
- 2) Butter 3x8.5in round pans. Line with parchment and butter the top of the parchment.
- 3) Sift together all-purpose flour, baking powder and baking soda in a bowl and set aside.
- 4) Double boil the chocolate, cocoa powder, and coffee. Don't bring the water to a boil. Stir to ensure heat is distributed evenly and the chocolate doesn't burn. As soon as the chocolate is melted, remove from heat, and let cool.
- 5) Combine the sugars, butter, and oil in the bowl of a stand mixer. Mix for 5 mins until well creamed, lighter in color.
- 6) Add in the eggs one at a time until well mixed. Add in the egg yolk and beat until completely mixed. Add in the vanilla extract and salt and mix until combined.
- 7) Add the flour mixture in 3 additions alternating with adding the buttermilk. After the last addition of flour, finish mixing by hand. Do not overmix – gently mix only until all the flour is well incorporated.

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- 8) Gently pour the batter into the 3 prepared pans and smooth out the surface of the batter.
- 9) Bake for 25 mins or until the edges of the cake are springy. The center of the cake will not be springy, but a tester inserted into the center should come out clean.

## **RASPBERRY SWISS MERINGUE BUTTERCREAM**

### **Ingredients:**

Egg whites: 110g

Pioneer Granulated sugar: 185g

Unsalted butter: 1.5 sticks = 175g, chopped into 1tablespoon pieces, at a cool room temp.

Kosher salt: 0.25tsp

Vanilla extract: 1 tsp

Raspberry: 4 oz

### **Method:**

- 1) Puree the raspberries until smooth using a blender. If using frozen raspberries, thaw before blending. Strain to remove the seeds.
- 2) Combine the sugar and egg whites in a metal mixing bowl and set over a bowl of barely simmering water.
- 3) Keep stirring this mixture. The sugar will dissolve. Cook this until the egg sugar mixture reaches 160F.
- 4) Remove the mixture from heat and transfer to the mixing bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment.
- 5) Whisk until mixture becomes a stiff meringue. For this to occur, the mixture will need to be cooled down significantly. Whisk for about 10 mins at high speed and set the bowl in the refrigerator for 15 mins or until mixture reaches 75F.
- 6) Return to the stand mixer and keep whisking until temperature of the mixture is 70F.
- 7) Switch to the paddle attachment.
- 8) Add in the butter pieces one at a time and adding the next piece after the previous piece is fully mixed in. This will take a while!

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- 9) If the mixture turns soupy (caused by butter being too warm), put the bowl in the fridge for a few minutes. If the mixture has curdled, put the mixing bowl over a bowl of barely simmering water and let the outside of the mixture start melting. In a few mins, mix it by hand and then return to the stand mixer and continue mixing. The buttercream should be smooth, silky, and thick.
- 10) Next add in the vanilla extract, salt, and raspberry puree. Mix until well combined.

### **CHOCOLATE CRUMB:**

#### **Ingredients:**

All-purpose flour: 105g  
Cornstarch: 4g  
Sugar: 100g  
Cocoa powder: 60g  
Kosher salt: 1tsp  
Unsalted butter: 80g, melted

#### **Method:**

- 1) Preheat oven to 300°F
- 2) Stir together all the dry ingredients together in a bowl.
- 3) Add in the melted butter and mix until combined. The mixture should form some clumps.
- 4) Spread this onto a parchment lined baking sheet in an even layer.
- 5) Bake for a total of 20 mins. At the 10-minute mark, remove sheet from the oven and stir to redistribute the mixture over the sheet. Break up larger clusters if desired.
- 6) After 20 mins, remove the sheet from the oven and let this cool.

### **CHOCOLATE GANACHE:**

#### **Ingredients:**

Semisweet Chocolate: 200g  
Unsalted Butter: 100g  
Heavy Cream: 100g

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**Method:**

- 1) Melt semisweet chocolate and butter together on a double boiler (or in bursts in a microwave)
- 2) Add heavy cream to it and stir until combined.
- 3) Ganache will thicken as it cools.

**ASSEMBLY:**

- 1) Cut top of cakes to ensure each layer is totally flat. Cut the edges off the cake and check that all 3 layers are the same size after trimming.
- 2) Place the first layer on the cake board and frost with a generous quantity of the raspberry Swiss meringue buttercream. Sprinkle the chocolate crumbs on the frosting.
- 3) Place the second cake layer carefully on top of the frosted first layer. Add the buttercream on top of this layer. Sprinkle the chocolate crumbs on the frosting.
- 4) Place the third cake layer on top.
- 5) Apply the thickened ganache as a crumb coating to the top and sides of the cake.
- 6) Once the crumb coat has set (should be a few mins in the fridge or about 30 mins during Michigan winter), apply a second coating of the ganache frosting. If the ganache frosting has thickened, it can be gently warmed with indirect heat.
- 7) If fresh raspberries are available, arrange a circle of them on top of the cake. The cake is now assembled and ready to enjoy!

***Divya Paul, Troy, MI***



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## **Chocolate Raspberry Torte Cake**

1 cup sugar  
½ cup unsweetened cocoa  
1 teaspoon Raspberry extract  
⅓ cup butter  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
2 cups heavy whipping cream  
mini chocolate chips

Combine sugar, cocoa, mixture raspberry extract, butter in small saucepan. Cook over medium heat stir until smooth and creamy. Cool to room temp. Place 2 cups of flour and baking powder in mixing bowl stir until combined, stir in ¾ cups of cocoa mixture. Shape into smooth ball, chill 1 hour.

Divide dough into 4 pieces. Line two cookie sheets with aluminum foil, mark two 8-inch circles. Bake at 375° for 10 to 12 minutes until almost set, cool on a cookie sheet.

Add remaining cocoa mixture to cream in small mixer bowl, beat until stiff. Place one pastry round on serving plate, spread with a fourth of whipped cream mixture, repeat layering with remaining three rounds and whipped cream mixture ending with whipped cream. Chill for several hours. Garnish with mini chips. .Enjoy!!

***Pamela Gilbeau, Frankenmuth, MI***



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## **Dragon Fruit Mooncake**

### **Cake Ingredients:**

1 tbsp dry milk powder  
4 tbsp unsalted butter  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 cups Pioneer sugar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
2 tsp baking powder  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp baking soda  
1 tsp salt  
1 cup boiling water  
1 tsp espresso powder  
2 eggs at room temperature  
1 cup 2% milk  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vegetable oil  
2 tsp vanilla bean paste

### **Dragon fruit buttercream Ingredients:**

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup dragon fruit  
4 cups Pioneer powdered sugar  
1 cup butter room temp

### **Chocolate Dragon:**

16 oz dark chocolate

### **Directions:**

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Spray two 9-inch cake pans with baking spray and prepare the bottom with parchment paper.
2. Add dry ingredients of flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and espresso to a large bowl and whisk to combine.
3. Place butter in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring until melted and add milk powder once it starts to foam. Continue to stir for 1 min until browned with nutty aroma. Add in cocoa powder and continue to stir until combined. Let the mixture bubble for 30 seconds and then remove from heat. Let cool.
4. Add milk, vegetable oil, eggs, vanilla, and browned butter mixture to bowl of stand mixer with paddle attachment on medium speed and mix until well combined. Mix in dry ingredient mixture. Pour in boiling water carefully and mix on low speed until well combined.

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5. Pour cake batter evenly into prepared cake pans and bake 30 min until toothpick comes out clean from center.

**Dragon Fruit Buttercream:**

1. Puree dragon fruit in a blender or food processor.
2. Add dragon fruit puree and softened butter to the bowl of a stand mixer and mix until completely combined.
3. Add powdered sugar to the mixture and beat on low. Scrape down sides and then increase speed to medium speed until light and fluffy.

**Chocolate Dragon:**

1. Place chopped chocolate in a medium microwave safe bowl and microwave for 20 second intervals, stirring in between, repeating until completely melted. Transfer to a piping bag with a rounded tip.
2. Pipe design on wax paper or silicone mold and let it sit in the refrigerator for 10 min until hardened and adorn the cake.

*Melissa Kildow, Grand Blanc, MI*



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## **Half Baked Hazelnut Infused Chocolate Cake**

1-9 inch round deep-dish cake pan  
1-10 inch round springform pan  
50 – 60 Hazelnut wafer rolls

### **For the One Layer Cake:**

1 cup Pioneer granulated sugar  
¼ cup vegetable oil  
1 large egg at room temperature  
⅓ cup sour cream at room temperature  
¼ cup hazelnut coffee creamer  
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon cream of tarter  
½ teaspoon kosher salt  
⅓ cup Dutch-process cocoa powder  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
½ cup freshly brewed hot coffee  
½ cup melted Nutella

### **For the Cream Topping:**

2 ½ cups heavy whipping cream  
1 cup Pioneer powdered sugar  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla  
16 ounces mascarpone cheese  
½ cup Nutella  
Cocoa powder for garnish

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease the 9-inch cake pan, line bottom with parchment paper (round and grease again. Set aside.

Combine the granulated sugar, oil and egg to bowl of stand mixer. Beat on medium speed for 2 minutes or until well mixed.

Beat in sour cream, coffee creamer and vanilla until smooth.

Add the baking soda, baking powder, cream of tartar and salt.

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Continue beating for another minute.

Add the cocoa powder, beating until smooth. Next beat in the flour on low speed until just combined. Do not over-mix. With mixture running on low speed, gradually add the hot coffee, mixing until just combined. Do not over-mix.

Scrape down sides of bowl and fold a few times by hand.

Pour the batter into prepared pan (this is a very wet batter). Bake in preheated oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until toothpick inserted into cake comes out clean. The cake should also spring back slightly when you press gently on the top.

Cool cake completely in the pan before turning it out onto a cooling rack.

While cake is cooling, sand wafer rolls around inside edge of springform pan.

Gently set cake inside of wafers when totally cool. Brush top with melted Nutella.

### **Prepare Cream Filling:**

Combine whipping cream, powdered sugar and vanilla in large bowl of stand mixer.

Using whisk attachment, whip until soft peaks form. Add Mascarpone cheese.

Continue beating until smooth and stiff peaks form. Divide into two bowls, adding the Nutella to one of the bowls, mixing thoroughly.

Alternate layers of cream on top of cake. Swirl with a cake tester or toothpick.

Refrigerate for at least one hour. Garnish top of cake with more wafer rolls. Dust with cocoa powder and fresh strawberries or garnishes of your choice.

***Carol Socier, Bay City, Mi***



*Cakes*

## **Mulled Wine Chocolate Cake with Orange Mascarpone Cream**

### **Mulled Wine Chocolate Cake:**

110g unsalted butter  
215g Pioneer Dark brown sugar  
75g Pioneer sugar  
2 large eggs  
1 tsp vanilla  
270ml cold mulled wine  
200g AP flour  
65g cocoa powder, I use black cocoa  
½ tsp baking powder  
¼ tsp baking soda  
¼ tsp salt  
1 tsp cinnamon  
1 tsp ginger  
¼ tsp nutmeg  
¼ tsp cloves  
¼ tsp allspice  
¼ tsp star anise

### **Orange Cream:**

500g full fat mascarpone  
300g Pioneer powdered sugar  
Zest of 2 oranges  
½ tsp cinnamon  
1 tsp vanilla bean paste  
200ml heavy cream

### **Chocolate Drip:**

50g dark chocolate chopped  
25g butter  
1 ½ mulled wine

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### **Instructions:**

#### **Cakes:**

1. Preheat oven to 350°, grease 2 6-inch pans and line with parchment
2. Cream butter & sugars until pale & fluffy, beat in eggs, then add vanilla extract
3. In a separate bowl, sift dry ingredients together
4. Fold in dry into butter mixture, then mulled wine. Don't overmix
5. Divide mixture between pans & bake for about 25 -30 minutes.

#### **Orange Cream:**

1. Place, mascarpone, powdered sugar, zest, cinnamon & vanilla in large bowl. Beat until smooth
2. Add the cream & whisk at high speed until it becomes stiff. Cover & store until needed

#### **Chocolate Dip:**

1. Place chopped chocolate & butter in a bowl over a pan of simmering water & stir until melted. Remove from heat & stir in mulled wine. Allow to cool a little before using.

***Melissa Chrzanowski, Saginaw, MI***



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## **Rasberried Devil's Food Trifle**

### **Ingredients**

1 cup boiling water  
4 ounces Dutch processed cocoa  
1 tablespoon instant espresso powder  
12 ounces Pioneer Sugar  
9 ounces unbleached all-purpose flour  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 ½ teaspoon baking soda  
4 large eggs, room temperature  
1 cup vegetable or canola oil  
½ cup buttermilk, room temperature  
3 oz box raspberry gelatin dessert mix

¾ cup boiling water  
½ cup cold water  
3 6-ounce packages of fresh raspberries, washed  
1-quart heavy whipping cream  
2 tablespoons Pioneer Powdered Sugar  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

### **Instructions**

1. Preheat oven to 350° with a rack in the middle. Spray a 13x9 baking pan with cooking spray, add parchment paper with some overhang on each end, and then spray the paper.
2. Place the cocoa and espresso powder in a small- to medium mixing bowl. Add the 1 cup boiling water and stir to dissolve and combine.
3. Place the Pioneer sugar, flour, salt, and baking soda in a large mixing bowl. Whisk to combine.
4. Place the eggs in a large liquid measuring cup (or another vessel with a pour spout) and whisk till frothy. Add the oil while whisking, then add the buttermilk while whisking.
5. Slowly pour the egg mixture into the cocoa mixture, and carefully whisk all wet ingredients together.

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6. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients, then whisk and stir together until it comes together with no dry spots.
7. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 25-30 minutes (until a toothpick comes out clean), rotating halfway through.
8. Cool the cake on a cooling rack for at least an hour, then, using a skewer, poke holes in it about two inches apart.
9. Pour the gelatin mix into a small mixing bowl. Add the  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup boiling water and stir for two minutes to dissolve. Pour the cold water in and stir it all together. Then, slowly and carefully pour this mixture all over the cake and place the cake in the fridge so it can set up (at least 3-4 hours).
10. Remove the cake from the fridge. Then, using the parchment, remove the cake from the pan to a cutting board, and cut the cake into cubes.
11. Pour the heavy whipping cream into a chilled bowl. Add the Pioneer Powdered Sugar and the vanilla extract and whip to stiff peaks.
12. Place enough of the cake cubes in a trifle bowl to cover the bottom of the bowl. Scoop and spread a third of the whipped cream on top of the cake, then sprinkle one of the packages of raspberries on top of the cream. Repeat this process two more times, for a total of three layers each, ending with berries on top.

***Tim Shorkey, Burton, MI***



*Cakes*

## "Richest" Chocolate Cake

### CAKE

1 ½ C flour  
1 ¼ C Pioneer granulated sugar  
3 Tbsp cocoa  
1 Tbsp baking soda  
½ tsp salt  
4 eggs  
½ C milk  
½ C coffee-flavored liqueur  
⅓ C vegetable oil  
1 Tbsp white vinegar  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 8 oz cream cheese  
1 C semisweet chocolate chips

### FROSTING

2 oz unsweetened baking chocolate  
2 Tbsp butter  
1 1/2 c sifted Pioneer confectioners' sugar  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
3 Tbsp hot milk

For cake preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 9" springform tube pan, set aside. In a large bowl stir together the first 5 ingredients. In another bowl, whisk together the next 6 ingredients. Add egg mixture to dry ingredients; stir until well blended. In a medium bowl, stir cream cheese & chocolate together until well blended. Beat cream cheese mixture into batter. Pour batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes. Cool in pan for 10 minutes; remove sides of pan & cool completely. Invert onto a serving plate.

For frosting, melt chocolate & butter in a small saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly, until smooth. Remove from heat; add sugar & vanilla. Stir until crumbly. Add milk & stir until smooth. Spread frosting over sides & top of cake.

*Pamela Hornbacher-Retzler, Caro, MI*





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## **Rosie's Chocolate Farmhouse Cake**

Mix: 1-20 oz. Can of crushed pineapple (undrained) with:  
1- 9 oz. Box of Mincemeat (break up and crumble well)  
1- Cup of Dried Cherries  
Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven to 325°F

Sift together and set aside:

- 3 Cups of Flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  Cup of unsweetened Cocoa Powder
- 1 teaspoon Baking Powder
- 1 teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1 teaspoon of Salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon of Cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of Nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of Cloves

Mix: 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  Cups of softened butter in a large bowl.  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  Cups of PIONEER Brown Sugar (packed)  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  Cups PIONEER White Sugar  
2 teaspoons of Almond Extract  
5 lightly beaten eggs  
1  $\frac{1}{4}$  Cups of Buttermilk  
Mix well but do not overbeat.

Mix 1/3 of dry mixture alternately with 1/3 of the wet mixture until all is incorporated. Do not over mix. Mix refrigerated fruit with 8 Tablespoons of flour, then add to the cake batter, then ADD:

- 1 Cup of Candied Cherries-Chopped
- 1 Cup of Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips
- 2 Cups of Chopped Walnuts

Do not over mix. Pour into 2 Bundt pans or 5 medium loaf pans. Bake 55 minutes at 325F, then lower the temperature to 300°F and bake an additional 10 minutes. Check for doneness, if needed, bake another 10 minutes.

Remove from the oven and cool for 20 minutes before removing from the pans.

Let cool. Melt 2 Cups of Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips, 4 Tablespoons of butter and 1/2 Cup of Light Corn Syrup. Add 2 teaspoons of Almond Extract and drizzle over the top of the cakes/ loaves.

***Carol Kammer, Macomb, MI***



*Cakes*

## ***Triple Chocolate Caramel Delight Cake***

### **Extra Moist Chocolate Cake**

2 C sifted flour  
2 C Pioneer sugar  
½ C packed unsweetened cocoa (prefer Dutch Processed Baking Cocoa)  
¼ C packed dark chocolate cocoa  
1 tsp espresso powder  
2 tsp baking powder  
1 ½ tsp baking soda  
1 tsp salt  
1 C buttermilk  
½ C Canola oil  
2 eggs  
2 tsp vanilla extract or vanilla bean paste  
1 C boiling water

### ***Directions:***

Pre-heat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour (3) eight-inch round pans. For best results, use parchment paper on bottoms of pans.

Combine all dry ingredients in mixer on low or whisk together well.

Add wet ingredients, (brought to room temperature), saving the water for last. Scrape down sides of the bowl with spatula. Mix on medium speed for about one minute. Then add boiling water, while mixing on low. Scrape down sides of bowl as needed and mix well. It's ok if there are still a few small lumps in batter. Batter will be thin.

Pour batter evenly into the three pans and bake for 22 to 28 minutes, until the toothpick comes out mostly clear and/or cake bounces back fully with finger touch. Let cool.

### **Stabilized Whipped Cream Cheese Filling**

2 C heavy whipping cream, cold  
1 C Confectioners powdered sugar (Pioneer)  
2 tsp vanilla bean paste (preferred) or vanilla extract  
2 T Instant vanilla pudding mix  
8 Oz Philadelphia cream cheese, cold

### ***Directions:***

For best results, chill metal bowl and mixers in freezer first. Beat heavy whipping cream, powdered sugar, pudding mix and vanilla to medium stiff peaks.

Slowly add cream cheese and beat to stiff peaks. Chill in refrigerator until use.

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### **Thick Salted Caramel Filling**

1 C salted butter, room temperature  
2 C packed light brown sugar (Pioneer)  
1 C light corn syrup  
14 oz (1 can) sweetened condensed milk  
2 T heavy whipping cream, room temperature  
2 tsp vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract  
2 tsp salt, or more for a more salted caramel (Himalayan pink sea salt preferred)

#### ***Directions:***

Add butter, light brown sugar, corn syrup and sweetened condensed milk into a large saucepan.

Heat over medium-high heat. Stir constantly until mixture is bubbling.

Slowly and carefully stir in heavy cream. When the cream is stirred in, the mixture can spatter up. Use a digital thermometer and continue to stir until temperature reaches 225°F or until soft ball stage.

Remove from heat and add vanilla and salt. Pour into a separate container for the caramel to cool.

### **Chocolate Ganache**

8 Oz heavy whipping cream  
8 Oz semi-sweet Baker's chocolate (or Ghirardelli), broken  
2 T corn syrup (for added shine)

#### ***Directions:***

Heat heavy whipping cream on stovetop, or in microwave.

Pour over broken semi-sweet chocolate. Let sit for about one minute. Then stir very well, until the chocolate is melted and well incorporated, with no lumps.

Add corn syrup.

Let sit at room temperature for about 10 to 15 minutes.

### **Chocolate Buttercream Cream Cheese Frosting**

12 Oz Philadelphia cream cheese, softened  
16 Oz softened salted butter (prefer Kerrygold Butter)  
2 lb. Confectioners powdered sugar (Pioneer)  
3 T chocolate ganache (see recipe above)  
2 T Unsweetened Cocoa (Dutch Processed)  
3 to 4 T dark chocolate cocoa  
1 ½ tsp vanilla bean paste or extract  
Optional: add 1 T unsweetened cocoa at a time, to desired chocolate flavor

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### ***Directions:***

Whip softened butter and cream cheese in mixer, until fluffy and light.

Slowly add powdered sugar to mixer on low speed until well combined, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Then increase speed, making sure sugar is well incorporated and consistency is fluffy.

Add ganache and cocoa, scraping down sides of bowl as needed.

Add vanilla and whip until well incorporated. If needed, add unsweetened cocoa and/or more powdered sugar to desired consistency and taste.

### ***Filling, frosting and decorating:***

Before starting, fill candy/fondant snowmen and pine tree molds with melted white chocolate, or white Ghirardelli/candy melting wafers. Store in refrigerator or freezer if desired.

After cakes have cooled, cut domes off tops until flat and even, if needed. Use a dab of frosting in the middle of a ten-inch cake board, place and center the first cake layer on board.

Note: If desired, spread a thin layer of chocolate ganache on cake first. Let sit briefly, before spreading fillings.

Pipe whipped cream cheese filling around the edges of each layer, leaving a small gap before the very edge. Then scoop a generous amount of caramel filling and spread out just to the piped whipped cream cheese, avoiding the edges. Pipe a thinner layer of whipped filling on top of the caramel. Repeat on second layer.

Apply frosting crumb coat and let chill in refrigerator. Then continue frosting. Allow frosted cake to chill in the refrigerator.

After cake has chilled, and caramel and ganache have cooled somewhat, pour caramel and ganache into squeeze condiment bottles to drip the ganache around the edges of cake. Then apply a layer of caramel on top of cake. Gently place cake in refrigerator or freezer for caramel and ganache to briefly chill.

Decorate top with the whipped cream cheese topping, swirled with a large, closed star tip and then drizzle with caramel and ganache.

After the caramel and ganache drips are done dripping down the sides, decorate bottom of cake with hardened white chocolate snowmen and trees.

Optional: Brush candy with vodka and brush on edible white pearl dust or white sparkling sugar to add sparkle. Can also add edible white glitter to the top of cake to look like snow.

Enjoy!!

***Naomi Toben-Matthews, Ypsilanti, MI***