

HAZELNUT CHOCOLATE OPERA CAKE

SERVES: 12-16

INGREDIENTS

For Hazelnut Joconde Sponge:

- 6 large eggs
- 1 cup ground hazelnuts
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup melted butter

For Hazelnut Buttercream:

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup ground hazelnuts
- 2 tablespoons hazelnut liqueur

For Chocolate Ganache:

- 12 ounces dark chocolate, chopped
- 1 ½ cups heavy cream
- 1/4 cup whole hazelnuts, finely chopped

For Chocolate Glaze:

- 8 ounces dark chocolate, chopped.
- 1/2 cup neutral oil (such as canola)

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 425°F and prepare three half-sheet baking pans with parchment paper.
2. For joconde sponge, separate egg whites and yolks into two mixing bowls.
3. Whip egg whites until stiff peaks form.
4. In another bowl, beat egg yolks with powdered sugar until pale and thick.
5. Fold ground hazelnuts and flour into egg yolk mixture.
6. Gently fold in whipped egg whites and melted butter.
7. Spread batter thinly on prepared baking sheets.
8. Bake each sheet for 5-7 minutes until just golden.
9. Allow sponge layers to cool completely.
10. For buttercream, beat butter until creamy.
11. Gradually add powdered sugar, ground hazelnuts, and hazelnut liqueur.
12. For ganache, heat cream until just simmering.
13. Pour over chocolate and let sit for 2 minutes.
14. Whisk until smooth and let cool to spreadable consistency.
15. Begin layering cake: alternating sponge, buttercream, and ganache. Repeat layering process three times.
16. Refrigerate cake for 1 hour to set.
17. For chocolate glaze, melt chocolate with oil.
18. Pour glaze over cake, allowing it to drip down sides.
19. Sprinkle with chopped hazelnuts.
20. Refrigerate for an additional hour before serving.