

Chocolate Birthday Sheet Cake

serves 24 (depending how you slice it)

This cake requires nothing to be at room temperature before you begin, and looks especially cute with sprinkles and a smattering of candles.

Ingredients:

for the cake...

2 cups granulated sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
1 cup water
1/4 pound (4 oz, or 1 stick) unsalted butter
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup buttermilk
2 extra-large eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

for the glaze...

1/4 pound (4 ounces, or 1 stick) unsalted butter
1/2 cup whole milk
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 cups powdered sugar
sprinkles for decorating (optional)

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Grease and flour a 11 X 17 X 2-inch sheet tray, typically referred to as a half-sheet tray. (You can also bake this in a 9 X 13-inch pan, but it will require a longer bake time in the oven.)

In a large mixing bowl, combine the granulated sugar, all-purpose flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and Kosher salt with a whisk until all the ingredients are melded together, and there are no streaks of white or black left.

In a small saucepan over medium heat, heat the water, unsalted butter, and vegetable oil until the butter melts. Stir occasionally. You are not trying to bring it to a simmer, but rather to heat it just until the butter melts.

Once the butter is melted, pour the hot butter mixture into the bowl with the dry ingredients. Combine well with a whisk.

Whisk in the buttermilk, eggs, and vanilla. Stir until well-combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking pan. Sprinkle the chocolate chips evenly over the top of the cake.

Bake until a cake tester comes out clean, about 20 minutes.

While the cake bakes, prepare the glaze.

In a small saucepan (you can use the same one in which you melted the butter) over medium heat, combine all the glaze ingredients. It will be very thick until the butter begins to melt. As it warms up, gently stir, patiently incorporating all the ingredients together. To remove any lumps from the powdered sugar, use a whisk at the end and beat it for a few seconds until smooth. Once the glaze is mixed, you can remove it from the heat.

When the cake comes out of the oven, gently pour the glaze over the hot cake. If your glaze has cooled and firmed up, don't worry. The heat from the cake will help soften it. Use an offset spatula to evenly spread the glaze over the entire cake. If you are using sprinkles, add them now.

Allow the cake to fully cool to room temperature before serving. Cut into squares and enjoy with ice cream and candles!