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### **Milk Chocolate Mousse Cake**

For this type of chocolate mousse cake, baked cake layers are filled with chocolate mousse. (For another kind of cake that is basically a baked mousse, see the Cinnamon-Scented Baked Chocolate Mousse Cake on page 257). This recipe is adapted from one by my friend Loretta Sartori, who runs a baking education program in Melbourne, Australia. I love the fact that the mousse sets only from the addition of the chocolate, without the use of gelatin, making it so much more delicate. Sometimes Loretta adds some prunes that have been soaked in Armagnac to the bottom layer of mousse filling. Make sure to prepare this the day before you intend to serve it to give the mousse filling plenty of time to chill and set.

Makes one 9-inch (23 cm) cake, about 12 servings

#### ***Cake Layer***

1 Cocoa Génoise, (see below), baked cooled, and cut horizontally into 3 layers (only 2 layers will be used to assemble the cake; wrap and freeze the extra layer for another use).

#### ***Moistening Syrup***

1/3 cup water  
1/4 cup sugar  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

#### ***Milk Chocolate Mousse***

3 cups heavy whipping cream  
1/3 cup sugar  
6 large egg yolks  
12 ounces (345 grams) best-quality milk chocolate, cut into 1/4-inch (6mm) pieces  
4 ounces (115 g) bittersweet (not unsweetened) chocolate, cut into 1/4-inch pieces

#### ***Finishing***

1 cup heavy whipping cream  
2 cups milk chocolate shavings (about 8 ounces/225 g)

One 9-inch (23 cm) springform pan

## Fresh From the Kitchen

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#### **Cocoa Génoise**

Makes one tall 9-inch (23 cm) layer.

3 large eggs  
3 large egg yolks  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
Pinch of salt  
1/2 cup of sugar  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1/3 cup cornstarch  
1/4 cup alkalized (Dutch process) cocoa powder

One 9-inch (23-cm) springform pan, 3 inches (7 cm) deep, buttered and the bottom lined with a disk of parchment or buttered wax paper cut to fit.

1. Set a rack in the middle level of the oven and preheat to 350° F (180°C).
2. Half-fill a saucepan with water and bring it to a boil over medium heat. Lower the heat so the water is simmering.
3. Combine the eggs, egg yolks, vanilla, and salt in the bowl of an electric mixer. Whisk by hand to break up the eggs, then gradually whisk in the sugar in a stream. Place the bowl over the simmering water and gently whisk until the mixture is lukewarm, about 115 F (45 C).
4. Place the bowl on the mixer with the whisk attachment and whip on medium to high speed until the foam is more than tripled in volume and very much lightened in color, 3 to 4 minutes. The outside of the mixer bowl will feel cool to the touch.
5. While the egg mixture is whipping, stir the flour and cornstarch together and place a strainer or sifter near them.
6. Remove the bowl from the mixer and sift 1/3 of the flour mixture over the egg foam. Use a large runner spatula to fold in the flour mixture, making sure you dig down to the bottom of the bowl every time you pass through, so that no lumps of flour accumulate there. Add half of the remaining flour mixture, folding until it is absorbed, then end with the remaining flour, folding in as directed.

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7. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top.
8. Tilt the pan so that the batter runs all the way to the top of the pan all around the inside—this helps the layer to bake straight and flat instead of doming in the center.
9. Bake the génoise until it is well risen and deep golden and feels firm when pressed in the center with a fingertip, 25 to 30 minutes.
10. Immediately unmold the cake onto a rack to cool. Cover the cake with another rack and invert so it cools right-side up.

### ***Assembling the Milk Chocolate Mousse Cake:***

1. For the syrup, bring the water and sugar to a boil in a small saucepan. Pour the syrup into a small heatproof bowl. Let cool and then stir in the vanilla.
2. For the mousse, combine 1 cup of the cream and the sugar in a medium saucepan and whisk to blend. Place over low heat and bring to a full rolling boil. Meanwhile, set a fine strainer over a clean glass or stainless-steel bowl and place them near the burner where you are heating the liquids. Whisk the egg yolks in a small bowl to break them up. When the liquid boils, whisk about 1/3 of it into the yolks. Return the liquid to a boil and, beginning to whisk before pouring, pour the yolk mixture into the boiling liquid. Whisk constantly until the cream thickens slightly—it won't be very thick—10 to 15 seconds after adding the yolks. Remove the pan from the heat, never ceasing to whisk. Quickly strain the sauce into the prepared bowl. Remove the strainer and set it over the saucepan. Whisk the sauce continuously for about 30 seconds to cool it down so the yolks don't scramble.
3. Combine the chocolates in a large bowl and pour the hot custard cream over them. Shake the bowl to make sure all the chocolate is submerged, then let it stand for 2 minutes. Whisk until smooth and set aside to cool to room temperature.
4. Whip the remaining 2 cups cream until it holds a soft peak. Set aside in the refrigerator.
5. After the chocolate cream has cooled, place one of the cake layers in the bottom of the prepared pan. Use a brush to sprinkle the layer with half of the syrup.

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6. Remove the whipped cream from the refrigerator and rewhip by hand if it has become liquid on the bottom. Quickly fold the cream into the cooled chocolate cream. Pour half the mousse on the cake layer in the pan and use a small offset spatula to spread it evenly. Top with the other cake layer without pressing it into the mousse, and sprinkle it with the remaining syrup. Top with the remaining mousse, and spread it evenly and smoothly. Refrigerate the cake overnight, covered to set the mousse.

7. To unmold the cake, run a small knife between the dessert and the inside of the pan. Unbuckle the side of the pan and lift it off.

8. For finishing, whip the cream and spread it smoothly all over the outside of the cake. Use a metal spatula to press the chocolate shavings against the side of the cake. Sprinkle the remaining shavings all over the top and use the spatula to sweep them into an even layer.

9. If your springform pan has a flat base, use a large spatula to loosen the cake from the pan base and move it to a platter.

**Serving:** Cut wedges of the cake at the table, using a long, thin-bladed knife. Wipe the knife with a wet cloth every time you cut through the cake to avoid tracking crumbs into it.

**Storage:** Keep the cake refrigerated until serving.