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Chocolate Lava Cakes

Makes 8 Cakes

Roy Yamaguchi, the chef-owner of Roy's Restaurants which began in Hawaii, became famous for his molten chocolate lava cakes. They come from the kitchen with a crisp outside and a gooey, chocolaty center, and are served with unsweetened whipped cream in a pool of bittersweet chocolate sauce. The secret that I discovered about these outrageous desserts is that you can make them ahead and refrigerate or freeze them, and then just bake them when you're ready, without even defrosting them. This dessert takes about 10 minutes to put together, and then it can be refrigerated for up to 8 hours or frozen for up to 1 month. Try serving them in a pool of raspberry sauce or caramel sauce.

3/4 cup (1-1/2 sticks) unsalted butter
1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
8 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
4 large eggs
1 large egg yolk
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/3 cup granulated sugar
2 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
8 chocolate truffle candies (such as Lindt or Ghiradelli)
Unsweetened whipped cream for serving

Make It Now:

1. Using 1/4 cup of the butter, generously butter eight 6-ounce ramekins and dust them with the confectioners' sugar. Set aside on a baking sheet.
2. Melt the remaining 1/2 cup butter and the chocolate in a medium-size saucepan over low heat, stirring once or twice until smooth. Set the chocolate aside and allow to cool slightly.
3. In a large bowl using an electric mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, beat the eggs, egg yolk, vanilla, and sugar at high speed, until the volume nearly triples, the color is very light, and the mixture drops from the beaters in a thick stream (this may take 5 minutes). Whisk in the chocolate mixture, then sprinkle the flour over the mixture, and fold it in until the flour is incorporated.
4. Ladle or pour the mixture into the prepared ramekins and place a truffle into the center of the batter in each ramekin. Cover and refrigerate the cakes for up to 8 hours or freeze for up to 1 month.



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Chocolate Lava Cakes, (continued)

Bake It Later:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Allow the ramekins to come to temperature for 30 minutes.
2. Bake refrigerated cakes for 10 to 12 minutes; bake frozen cakes for 15 to 17 minutes. The cakes are done when they are puffed and appear set on the top. Run a paring knife around the inside edges of the ramekins to loosen the cakes, invert them onto individual serving plates, let cool for 1 minute, and then lift off the ramekins. Serve with a dollop of unsweetened whipped cream. Cover and refrigerate for up to 1 day, but do not freeze.