

CAPOWNIE

Serves: A lot.

Created by Kate Orenberg, summerofpie.com

It's easiest to make a whole layer (pie to cake) in a single day. Budget more than one day to make all three layers.

BASIC PIE PASTRY (for all pies) -- you might want to prepare in two batches

4 cups sifted unbleached all-purpose flour

1 1/2 tsp salt

4 tsp sugar

1 1/3 cup butter

1 cup very cold water, approx

Mix flour, sugar, and salt in food processor fitted with steel blade. Scatter butter over dry ingredients and pulse until mixture resembles coarse cornmeal, 10 to 15 seconds. Sprinkle water slowly over the top of the flour mixture while pulsing mixer. Use only enough water to make the dough stick together when a small amount is squeezed in your hand; be careful not to over mix. Dough will be slightly crumbly. Separate dough into five parts (with one being slightly smaller than the others). Gently shape dough into discs (without kneading) and wrap tightly in plastic, and place in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 days. If leaving the dough in the refrigerator for more than 1 hour, let it sit out and warm up a bit before rolling (how long depends on how warm your kitchen is, do not set the dough on a heated/warm surface).

BOTTOM LAYER

BROWNIE

Adapted from King Arthur's Flour "Fudge Brownies"

1/2 stick unsalted butter

1/2 cup sugar

1/3 cup cocoa

1/4 tsp salt

1/4 tsp baking powder

1 large eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

1/3 cup unbleached flour

1/3 cup mini chocolate chips

On a lightly floured surface, roll out a larger portion of dough into a 15" circle. Carefully place in ungreased 9" pie pan lined with a parchment paper round; ease the dough carefully down the sides and bottom of the pan pressing it lightly into the bottom edge. Trim dough to leave only 1/2" overhang. Tuck overhanging dough under so that folded edge is flush with rim of pan and edge stand up over the top of the pan. Flute the edges with your fingers. Chill shell until firm, about 1 hour or overnight (cover in plastic wrap if chilling overnight).

Preheat oven to 350°.

In a medium-sized microwave-safe bowl, melt the butter completely, then add the sugar and stir to combine.

Add cocoa, salt, and baking powder and stir until smooth. Add beaten eggs and mix well; then add vanilla and mix. Add the flour and chips, again stirring until smooth.

Pour brownie batter into chilled pie shell and bake for 15 minutes. Brownie will not be fully cooked. Prepare pie filling while brownie and shell are in the oven.

CHERRY PIE FILLING

2 1/2 - 3 cups tart cherries (remove any excess liquids)

1/3 cup sugar (opt depending on the sweetness of the cherries)

2 tbsp corn or tapioca starch
2 tsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp kirsch (opt)
1 tbsp unsalted butter

Keep oven at 350°.

In a medium saucepan add the cherries, sugar, tapioca, salt, lemon juice, and Kirsch or almond extract (if using) and gently toss to combine. Cook on medium heat for about 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally and draining any accumulating liquids. Let sit for about 10-15 minutes, again, draining any excess liquids, and then pour the mixture over partially baked brownie batter in the pie shell.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out a larger portion of dough into a 15" circle. Carefully place in ungreased 9" pie pan lined with a parchment paper round (I find it easiest to "roll up" the dough around the pin and then unroll it over the pan); ease the dough carefully down the sides and bottom of the pan pressing it lightly into the bottom edge (you will need to wet the edges of the bottom crust with water to get it to stick to the top crust). Trim dough (with kitchen scissors) to leave only 1/2" overhang. Bake 25 minutes.

NOTE: You will need at least one 10-inch by 3-inch deep cake pan, greased and floured, to complete the following recipe.

CHOCOLATE CAKE

Adapted from Cook's Illustrated "Old-Fashioned Chocolate Layer Cake"

12 tbsp unsalted butter (1 1/2 sticks), very soft
4 oz unsweetened chocolate, finely chopped
1/2 cup boiling water
1 rounded tsp instant espresso
1 3/4 cups sugar
1 3/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour (8 3/4 oz)
1/4 cup Dutch-processed cocoa
1 1/2 tsps baking soda
1 tsp table salt
1 cup half and half
2 tsps vanilla extract
4 large eggs
2 large egg yolks

Adjust oven rack to middle position; preheat oven to 325°.

Grease one 10-inch-round by 3-inch-high cake pan with softened butter; line bottom with parchment paper round and grease; dust pans with flour and knock out excess.

Combine chocolate, espresso, and boiling water in a bowl; stir until chocolate is melted. Add 1/2 cup of sugar and stir until thick and glossy; set aside.

Whisk flour, cocoa, baking soda, and salt in medium bowl. Combine half and half and vanilla in small bowl. In bowl of standing mixer fitted with whisk attachment, whisk eggs and yolks on medium-low speed until combined, about 10 seconds. Add remaining sugar, increase speed to high, and whisk until fluffy and lightened in color, 2 to 3 minutes. Replace whisk with paddle attachment. Add cooled chocolate mixture to egg/sugar mixture and mix on medium speed until thoroughly incorporated, 30 to 45 seconds, pausing to scrape down sides of bowl with rubber spatula as needed. Add softened butter one tbsp at a time, mixing about 10 seconds after each addition. Add about one-third of flour mixture followed by half of milk mixture, mixing until incorporated after each addition (about 15 seconds). Repeat using half of remaining flour mixture and all of remaining milk mixture (batter may appear separated). Scrape down sides of bowl and add remaining flour mixture; mix at medium-low speed until batter is thoroughly combined, about 15 seconds. Remove bowl from mixer and fold batter once or twice with rubber spatula to incorporate any remaining flour.

Spoon small amount of batter into cake pan until bottom is coated approx 1/3" deep. Bake for 7-10 minutes until batter is soft but solid enough to support the pie. Remove pecan pie from its pan and place in the middle of the cake pan. Spoon remaining cake batter on top of

pie. Bake cake until toothpick inserted into center comes out mostly clean, about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes (depending on the oven it can take up to 1 hour and 30 minutes). Cool cake in pan for 15 minutes, then invert onto wire rack. Cool cake to room temperature before frosting.

MIDDLE LAYER

M&M COOKIE BAR

1 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup (1 sticks) butter, softened
3/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 large eggs
1/3 cup mini M&Ms

On a lightly floured surface, roll out a larger portion of dough into a 15" circle. Carefully place in ungreased 9" pie pan lined with a parchment paper round; ease the dough carefully down the sides and bottom of the pan pressing it lightly into the bottom edge. Trim dough to leave only 1/2" overhang. Tuck overhanging dough under so that folded edge is flush with rim of pan and edge stand up over the top of the pan. Flute the edges with your fingers. Chill shell until firm, about 1 hour or overnight (cover in plastic wrap if chilling overnight).

Preheat oven to 350°.

Beat butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar and vanilla extract in large mixer bowl until creamy. Add egg beating well, then add flour, baking soda and salt and stir in M&Ms.

Spread cookie batter into the bottom of the chilled pie shell, cover pie shell edges with foil. Bake for about 20 minutes. Set aside.

*If cookie dough is filling too much of the shell you may need to carve out some of the middle of it to accommodate the custard. Do this after it has cooled a bit.

VANILLA CUSTARD

Ingredients - 1/2 recipe
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup flour
1/2 tbsp cornstarch
1/8 tsp salt
1/2 vanilla bean, split lengthwise
1 cups milk
2 egg yolks
1 tbsp butter
1/2 tbsp vanilla

In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine sugar, flour, cornstarch and salt. Scrape the seeds out of the vanilla bean pods and add with remaining pods to pan. Slowly whisk in milk, constantly stirring until it's steaming and slightly thickened. Remove bean pods.

In a separate bowl slowly pour about 1/3 of the hot milk mixture into the egg yolks by whisking constantly. Whisk the egg mixture back into the saucepan with the remaining milk mixture; stirring continuously. Switching to a heat proof spatula, stir in the butter and vanilla and continue to cook until mixture thickens. At first the mixture will become quite lumpy, keep stirring and eventually it will smooth out and thicken to a pudding-like consistency. Remove from heat and set aside.

NOTE: You will need at least one 10-inch by 3-inch deep cake pan, greased and floured, to complete the following recipe.

RED VELVET CAKE

Adapted from NYT Cooking "Red Velvet Cake"

2/3 cup butter, at room temperature
3 3/4 tablespoons powder, divided
1 3/4 cups sugar
3 eggs
3 teaspoons vanilla
3 tablespoons red food coloring
1 1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
3 1/4 cups flour, sifted
1 1/4 cup whole buttermilk
1 1/4 tablespoon vinegar

1/2 cup mini chocolate chips

Adjust oven rack to middle position; preheat oven to 325°.

Cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs one at a time and beat vigorously until each is incorporated. Mix in vanilla.

In a separate bowl, make a paste of the cocoa and the food coloring. Blend into butter mixture.

Sift together remaining dry ingredients. Alternating in 2 batches each, add dry ingredients and buttermilk to the butter mixture. In the last batch of buttermilk, mix in the vinegar before adding to the batter. Mix until blended.

Spoon small amount of batter into cake pan until bottom is coated approx 1/3" deep. Bake for 7-10 minutes until batter is soft but solid enough to support the pie. Remove cookie pie from its pan and place in the middle of the cake pan. Spread cooked custard into the pie shell, and sprinkle the mini chocolate chips over the top. Carefully spoon remaining cake batter on top of pie, making sure the batter fills the sides and completely surrounds the pie. **There may be a small amount of leftover batter, depending on the size of your pie, don't overfill your cake pan.**

Bake cake until toothpick inserted into center comes out mostly clean, about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes (depending on the oven it can take up to 1 hour and 30 minutes). Cool cake in pan for 15 minutes, then invert onto wire rack. Cool cake to room temperature before frosting.

TOP LAYER

APPLE PIE FILLING

2 – 2 1/2 lbs baking apples, peeled, cored and diced (I like Braeburns and Gala)
1 tsp lemon juice
1 rounded tbsp corn starch
1/4 cup brown sugar
2 tsp ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp allspice
2 tbsp maple syrup

In a medium saucepan cook apples and lemon juice on medium heat, stirring regularly until they are soft (but still hold their shape), about 10 minutes — some apple pieces may start to break down, that's okay. Drain all liquids. Return to heat; add corn starch, stir and cook for an additional 1-2 minutes. Remove from heat and mix in sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice. Add maple syrup, stir and set aside. On a lightly floured surface, roll out a larger portion of dough into a 15" circle. Carefully place in ungreased 9" pie pan lined with a parchment paper round (I find it easiest to "roll up" the dough around the pin and then unroll it over the pan); ease the dough carefully down the sides and bottom of the pan pressing it lightly into the bottom edge. Trim dough (with kitchen scissors) to leave only 1/2" overhang.

CHEESECAKE

Crust

5 crushed graham crackers or 3/4 cup graham cracker crumbs
1 tbsp packed brown sugar
3 tbsp melted butter

Mix graham crackers and sugar together. Add butter and stir until combined. Press mixture lightly, but firmly, onto bottom of pie crust in pie pan.

Cheesecake Filling

Adapted from Bakerella.com's "Cheesecake Bars"

1 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup sugar
2 1/2 tsp flour
1 egg
3 oz. sour cream
1 1/2 tsp vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cream the sugar, cream cheese, and flour with an electric mixer on medium until light and fluffy. On medium low, add egg, mixing well. Add sour cream and vanilla and mix until just combined. Pour on prepared crust, cover edges of crust with foil or crust protector, and bake for about 20 minutes. Remove from oven.

Roll out smaller dough disc to 10" circle. Gently spoon all of the apple filling on top of the cheesecake. Place dough over filling to cover, trimming to fit just over the bottom crust (you may have to wet the bottom crust slightly with water until a thin paste forms so that the top crust will stick to it). Cut vents in the top crust and bake for 25 minutes until top pale but cooked. Cool completely; cover in plastic wrap and store at room temperature or in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

NOTE: You will need at least one 10-inch by 3-inch deep cake pan, greased and floured, to complete the following recipe.

VANILLA CAKE

Adapted from Cook's Illustrated "Yellow Layer Cake"

6 large eggs, room temperature
3/4 cup half and half, room temperature
5 tsp vanilla extract
3 1/3 cups unbleached flour
2 1/4 cups granulated sugar
2 1/2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp table salt
24 tbsp (3 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature

Adjust oven rack to middle position; preheat oven to 325°.

Grease one 10-inch-round by 3-inch-high cake pan with softened butter; line bottom with parchment paper round and grease; dust pans with flour and knock out excess.

Beat eggs, half and half, and vanilla with fork in small bowl; measure out 1 cup of this mixture and set aside. Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in bowl of standing mixer fitted with paddle attachment; mix on lowest speed to blend, about 30 seconds. With mixer still running at lowest speed, add butter one piece at a time; mix until butter and flour begin to clump together and look sandy and pebbly, with pieces about the size of peas, 30 to 40 seconds after all butter is added. Add reserved 1 cup of egg mixture and mix at lowest speed until

incorporated, 5 to 10 seconds. Increase speed to medium-high and beat until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Add remaining egg mixture (about 1/2 cup) in slow steady stream, about 30 seconds. Stop mixer and thoroughly scrape sides and bottom of bowl. Beat on medium-high until thoroughly combined and batter looks slightly curdled, about 15 seconds longer. (To mix using hand mixer, whisk flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in large bowl. Add butter pieces and cut into the flour mixture with a pastry blender. Add reserved 1 cup of egg mixture; beat with hand mixer at lowest speed until incorporated, 20 to 30 seconds. Increase speed to high, add remaining egg mixture, and beat until light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Stop mixer and thoroughly scrape sides and bottom of bowl. Beat at high speed 15 seconds longer.)

Spoon small amount of batter into cake pan until bottom is coated approx 1/3" deep. Bake for 7-10 minutes until batter is soft but solid enough to support the pie. Remove apple pie from its pan and place in the middle of the cake pan. Spoon remaining cake batter on top of pie. **There may be a small amount of leftover batter, depending on the size of your pie, don't overfill your cake pan.**

Bake cake until toothpick inserted into center comes out mostly clean, about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes (depending on the oven it can take up to 1 hour and 30 minutes). Cool cake in pan for 15 minutes, then invert onto wire rack. Cool cake to room temperature before frosting.

VANILLA FROSTING (for between the two cake layers)

12 tbsp unsalted butter
1/2 tsp table salt
6 cups confectioners' sugar
4 tbsp vanilla
4-6 tbsp half-n-half

Melt butter in a heat proof bowl in the microwave, let cool slightly.

In medium bowl, whisk together salt and sugar. With standing mixer on lowest speed, gradually add to melted butter and vanilla. Add half-n-half, 1 tbsp at a time, beating until sugar is well moistened and frosting is no longer stiff, stopping once to scrape down bowl. Increase speed to medium-high; beat until creamy, stopping once to scrape down bowl, about 1 minute.

If frosting is too loose, place in the refrigerator for 15-20 minutes to firm. Remove and beat on medium-high for about 1 minute until fluffy.

Place chocolate cake on a platter and frost the top with almost all of the frosting (reserve a few tablespoons worth for crumb-coating and patching empty spaces between the cakes); place the vanilla cake on top.

THE BEST CARAMEL BUTTERCREAM (for outside of cake)

3 cups granulated sugar
1 1/2 cup water
1 1/2 cup heavy cream
3 tbsp butter, cold

24 tbsp unsalted butter (3 sticks), at room temperature
3 tsp sea salt
5 cups powdered sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract

Pour 1 cup water into 2-quart heavy-bottomed saucepan; add sugar to center of pot to keep granules from adhering to sides of pot. Bring to boil over high heat, covered. Uncover pot, insert candy thermometer, and continue to boil until syrup is thick and straw-colored, registering 300 degrees on candy thermometer, about 15-20 minutes. Reduce heat to medium; continue to cook until sugar is medium amber, begins to smoke, and registers 350 degrees on candy thermometer, about 5 minutes longer.

Meanwhile, when temperature of syrup reaches 300 degrees, bring cream and salt to simmer in small, heavy-bottomed saucepan over high heat. (If cream reaches simmer before syrup reaches 350 degrees, remove cream from heat and set aside.)

Remove sugar syrup from heat. Pour about one quarter of hot cream into sugar syrup; let bubbling subside. Add remaining cream; let bubbling subside. Whisk gently until smooth; whisk in butter. Set aside until cool to the touch, about 25 minutes.

Combine butter, and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on medium-high speed until light in color and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Reduce speed to low, add powdered sugar, and mix until completely incorporated. Add vanilla and mix until incorporated, about 1 minute.

Turn mixer off and scrape down the sides of the bowl, then add caramel. Beat frosting on medium-high speed until airy and thoroughly mixed, about 2 minutes. Cover and refrigerate until stiff, about 30 minutes.

Remove from refrigerator, and beat again on medium-high speed until frosting is light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. If frosting is too loose, add 1-2 cups additional powdered sugar and repeat refrigeration and re-beating.

Frost outside of cake.

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