



This cake takes a bit of time to make as there are quite a few components to prepare including candied pecans, custard filling, and bourbon-infused swiss meringue buttercream. The end result is a soft and silky cake with a creamy filling and a slight crunch texture.

Bourbon Cake

Ingredients

5 egg whites, room temperature
 2 2/3 cups flour
 4 tablespoons cornstarch
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1/3 cup vegetable oil
 1 1/4 cup 2% milk
 1 tablespoon white vinegar
 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
 3/4 cups unsalted butter
 2 cups sugar
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1 tablespoon bourbon

Ingredients - Filling

1/4 cup sugar
 2 tablespoons cornstarch
 1/2 cup 2% milk
 1/2 cup 35% cream
 2 egg yolks
 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 cup candied pecans*

Ingredients - Drizzle

1/4 cup 35% cream
 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Ingredients - Buttercream

5 egg whites
 1 cup sugar
 Pinch of salt
 1 1/2 cups unsalted butter
 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 1 tablespoon bourbon

Making Candied Pecans

Preheat your oven to 250°F and line a cookie sheet with parchment paper or a silicone mat. Beat 1 egg white until frothy and toss in 3 cups pecans. Add 1 tablespoon water, 1 cup sugar, and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Toss to coat the pecans. Spread onto the prepared pan and bake for 1 hour. Store extra candied pecans in an airtight container.

Instructions

Start by preparing your custard filling as it will need time to cool. Whisk together the sugar and cornstarch in a bowl. Whisk together the milk, cream, and egg yolks in a measuring cup. Add the egg mixture along with the butter into a saucepan and bring to a boil. While whisking, add the sugar and the cornstarch and stir continuously until the mixture thickens to a pudding consistency. Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla. Strain the pastry cream through a fine sieve into a bowl. Cover with plastic wrap, pressing it directly on the pastry cream to prevent skin from forming. Refrigerate until chilled and ready to assemble (note: the pastry cream can be made ahead of time and stored for up to 2 days).

Preheat your oven to 350°F and prepare three 6" (or two 8") round pans by spraying with non-stick spray and lining the bottom with parchment paper. Sift together the flour, cornstarch, sugar, salt, baking powder, and baking soda. Set aside. In a measuring cup, mix together the milk and vinegar and set aside for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes, add the egg whites, bourbon, and vanilla and mix together thoroughly.

In a mixing bowl fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter until light and fluffy. Add in the flour mixture gradually and mix until the butter and flour form sand-like beads. Once the sandy texture has been

achieved, pour in the oil and half the milk mixture. Mix for 2 minutes and then add the remaining milk mixture, beating for an additional minute. Pour the batter evenly between the three pans. Bake for 40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool completely on a wire rack before frosting.

While the cakes are cooling, prepare the bourbon swiss meringue buttercream. Combine the egg whites, sugar, and salt in a metal mixing bowl from your stand mixer. Set the mixing bowl over a pot with simmering water. Whisk the egg mixture continuously until the sugar dissolves and the mixture reaches 160°F. The mixture will feel warm to the touch and will be completely smooth if rubbed between your fingers.

Remove the eggs from the heat, and using the whisk attachment, beat the eggs on low speed for 2 minutes. Gradually increase the speed increments every 2 to 3 minutes. Continue to mix until the mixture until stiff peaks form. The mixture will be fluffy and glossy. Turn the speed down to low and add the butter a few tablespoons at a time. Once all the butter has been added, whisk in the vanilla and the bourbon. Switch the whisk attachment to a paddle attachment and beat for an additional 2 minutes (this removes any air bubbles). Tint the frosting to any colors desired for frosting, reserving some for the crumb coat. Transfer the frosting to a piping bag for the crumb coat and layer edges. Transfer the colors chosen to bags fitted with tips of your choice.

Prepare the chocolate drip by melting the semi-sweet chocolate chips with the cream in a metal bowl over simmering water. Mix until smooth and creamy. Set aside to cool. Once cool, transfer to a piping bag or use a spoon to drop onto the cake edge. Note: If the ganache is too thick, add additional cream 1 teaspoon at a time.

To assemble the cake, snip the edge of the piping bag to create a 1/2" hole. Follow the edge of the cake layer to create a dam that will hold in the custard. Place half the custard on the first layer and sprinkle with 1/2 cup of candied pecans that have been roughly chopped. Place the second layer on the cake and repeat this process. Add the final layer to the cake. To crumb coat the cake, place the cake on a stand and while turning, add the buttercream to the outside bottom working up to cover the top. Use a pastry scraper or a metal spatula to run along the sides and top to even out the frosting. You do not need to fully cover the outside at this point. Place the frosted cake into the refrigerator and cool for 20 to 30 minutes for the butter to set.

Once the cake has cooled, repeat the previous frosting process until the entire outside is covered and smooth. Before finishing the final decorations, return to the refrigerator once again to harden. Once the frosting is hard, you can trim the top edge using the spatula to even it out and make sharp edges. Snip the edge of the prepared chocolate ganache and while following the top edge of the cake, allow the ganache to drip down the sides. With the remaining frosting, finish the bottom and top edges with dots.

Your decorations will be dependent on the tip used. For the sample shown, the green was made with petal decorating tip (ruffles created by going back and forth while piping) and the pink hearts with a round tip (created by pressing down at the top from one side, pulling down at an angle, and then repeating from the opposite direction to overlap at the end).

