

Flourless Chocolate Cake with Salted Caramel

Serves 16

I know. I know. I know. Serves 16! Well, it also freezes and tastes BETTER after it's frozen. Just give it 24 hours to defrost. A freezer full of personalized deserts? That's something on one can't complain about.

Cake

16 circles of parchment paper cut to fit a 5oz ramekin (optional)

7 ounces semi-sweet chocolate, chopped in pieces

1³/₄ sticks butter

1 cup granulated sugar

1 TBS vanilla extract

5 eggs

1 egg yolk

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat 16, 5oz ramekins with non-stick cooking spray.

NOTE: If you don't have 16 ramekins you can certainly make this in batches, just make sure to wash and re-coat them before adding the second helping of batter. On the, "coating front," I like to use a non-stick cooking spray like Pam because it's easy. A lot of people use room temperature butter and spread it with a cloth or paper towel.

Optional - Add parchment paper to each ramekin and coat it as well. You don't have to do this step but it makes removing the cake WAY easier.

Add chocolate and butter to a microwave safe bowl. Microwave on high at 20 second intervals, stirring until just smooth.

NOTE: You could do this in a double boiler, but I find the microwave a lot easier.

Add sugar in ¹/₄ cup increments, stirring each addition until smooth. Stir in vanilla. Stir in eggs, one at a time, until fully incorporated. Stir in egg yolk until fully incorporated.

Fill ramekins halfway with batter, uses about ¹/₃ cup.

Bake for 17 minutes. Continue baking, checking every minute to minute and a half until the cakes are finished. At 17 minutes the centers are normally still runny through the cracks of the cake and bubbling. Bake until there isn't bubbling.

Remove and allow to cool. Remove from ramekin by running a butter knife around the outside and easing it out.

TO FREEZE – Wrap securely in plastic wrap. Before serving allow 24 hours to defrost at room temperature.

Salted Caramel

This isn't the kind of caramel which is going to set and be chewy. It's the runny, sticky kind which coats every bite – perfect for topping your cakes. Don't try and use a non-stick skillet though. You'll ruin it with the metal whisk you're going to need to use in order to get a smooth caramel.

1 cup sugar
¼ tsp salt plus
6 oz butter
½ cup half and half
1 large canning jar or old (clean) jam jar

Using a heavy bottom skillet and spread sugar evenly over the surface of the skillet. Heat over medium heat until sugar begins to liquefy. This is an interesting process, which sounds a lot harder than it is. The key is to not over work the sugar. Move it just a little, so the unmelted sugar on the outside gets to the middle. You don't want big chunks of sugar. It should all melt.

As sugar begins to liquefy and take on a copper color, whisk in butter and salt. Use a metal whisk. It picks up everything off the bottom of the pan a lot better than a silicon one.

As butter fully melts, remove pan from heat and whisk in half and half vigorously until fully incorporated. Pour caramel into your large canning jar or old jam jar.

To Assemble Cakes

1 tsp sea salt

Set cake in the middle of plate. Depress the center of the cake with the backside of a spoon creating a small well.

Fill the well with caramel sauce.

Sprinkle with sea salt and enjoy.

Note: A little salt goes a LONG way.

Baguette Taste – Wonder Bread Budget