



FOOD DRINK AND CONVERSATION
FROM AROUND THE TABLE

Chocolate Layer Cake

3 ounces fine-quality semisweet chocolate
1 1/2 cups hot brewed coffee
3 cups sugar
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 cups unsweetened cocoa powder (not Dutch process)
2 teaspoons baking soda
3/4 teaspoon baking powder
1 1/4 teaspoons salt
3 large eggs
3/4 cup vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups well-shaken buttermilk
3/4 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 300°F. and grease pans. Line bottoms with rounds of wax paper and grease paper. Finely chop chocolate and in a bowl combine with hot coffee. Let mixture stand, stirring occasionally, until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth.

Into a large bowl sift together sugar, flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. In another large bowl with an electric mixer beat eggs until thickened slightly and lemon colored (about 3 minutes with a standing mixer or 5 minutes with a hand-held mixer). Slowly add oil, buttermilk, vanilla, and melted chocolate mixture to eggs, beating until combined well. Add sugar mixture and beat on medium speed until just combined well. Divide batter between pans and bake in middle of oven until a tester inserted in center comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Cool layers completely in pans on racks. Run a thin knife around edges of pans and invert layers onto racks. Carefully remove wax paper and cool layers completely. Cake layers may be made 1 day ahead and kept, wrapped well in plastic wrap, at room temperature.