

Southern Caramel Cake

From the Kitchen of [Deep South Dish](#)

For the Cake:

3 cups cake flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup (2 sticks) of unsalted butter, softened at room temperature
2 cups granulated sugar
4 large eggs
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
Caramel icing, recipes below
3/4 cup of finely chopped toasted pecans, or whole pecan halves, *optional*

For the Caramel Icing:

2 cups of granulated sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons of baking soda
2 tablespoons of white corn syrup
1/2 cup of buttermilk
1/2 cup of vegetable shortening
1/2 cup of unsalted butter
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Have everything at room temperature. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray the bottoms of three 9-inch cake pans with cooking spray. Cut rounds of parchment paper to place into the bottoms of each pan and grease or flour the pan and paper, or spray with Baker's Joy; set aside. In a large bowl, sift together the cake flour, baking powder and salt; set aside.

With a mixer, cream the butter first on medium speed, then add the sugar a little at a time, beating well for about 6 minutes total. Reduce the speed to low and add the eggs, one at a time, mixing each in before adding the next one. Start adding the flour and alternate adding in the flour and the milk, starting with the flour and ending with the flour. Add the vanilla and mix well.

Equally divide the batter among the three pans and level the batter. Bake at 350 degrees for about 25 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick comes back clean, shifting the pans around halfway through. Don't overcook it or it will be dry, so check at about 20 minutes. Cool in the pan for about 10 minutes, turn out onto a rack to cool completely.

For the icing, combine all ingredients except vanilla in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until it reaches the desired caramel color. Remove from heat and add

vanilla. Use a hand held mixer to beat it until it cools and becomes thick enough to spread. Spread thinly on each layer, on the top and along the sides. Sprinkle the nuts on top before icing sets, or decorate the top and sides with whole pecan halves.

Note: I used Swan's Down cake flour and Land O'Lakes unsalted butter. To make a cake flour substitute, for every 1 cup of cake flour, use 1 cup of all purpose flour MINUS 2 tablespoons. Replace the 2 tablespoons of flour with cornstarch and whisk together well.

Alternate Icings:

Classic Burnt Sugar Caramel Icing

*From the Kitchen of **Deep South Dish***

3-1/4 cups of granulated sugar, *separated*
1 cup of whole milk
1/2 cup (1 stick) of butter
1 teaspoon of vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon of baking soda
1/4 cup of boiling water

Do not attempt this icing on a rainy day. In a large saucepan over medium heat combine 3 cups of the sugar with the milk, butter, vanilla and baking soda; bring mixture up to a boil. Meanwhile cook the remaining 1/4 cup of the sugar in a cast iron skillet over medium high heat until melted and browned. Quickly stir in the boiling water; stir until blended. Add some of the milk mixture to the skillet to deglaze, then transfer the contents of the skillet to the saucepan. Boil, stirring constantly, until mixture reaches 240 degrees F (soft-ball stage). Remove saucepan from the heat and beat until thick and creamy. Let cool and ice cake.

This recipe below is not traditional, but it's easy and it is one that is most commonly used today.

Easy Caramel Icing

*From the Kitchen of **Deep South Dish***

1 (1 pound) box of powdered sugar, *sifted*
1 cup (2 sticks) of unsalted butter
2 cups of light brown sugar, packed
1/4 cup of heavy cream or milk
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Sift powdered sugar into a mixing bowl; set aside. In a heavy bottomed saucepan, combine the butter and brown sugar and stir over medium low heat until blended. Stir in the cream and bring mixture up to a full rolling boil. Immediately remove from the heat and add the vanilla extract and blend. Set aside to cool until lukewarm. When ready to frost the cake, add the mixture to

the mixing bowl with the sifted powdered sugar and beat on high until creamy and spreadable. If icing begins to harden, beat in, literally only a drop or two of cream at a time, by hand to loosen it. Don't add too much, just a drop until it's spreadable again.

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