Italian Love Cake Recipe

Prep time 25 minutes **Cook time** 1 hour 10 minutes **Serves** 16 to 20

Ingredients

For the cake:

- Cooking spray
- 1 (15.25-ounce) box chocolate cake mix
- Water, eggs, and oil needed for cake mix (see package directions)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons instant espresso powder (optional)
- 2 pounds whole-milk ricotta cheese
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

For the topping:

- 1 (8-ounce) container Cool Whip, thawed
- 1 (3.9-ounce) box instant chocolate pudding mix.
- 2 cups cold whole milk

Instructions

Make the cake:

1. Heat the oven to 350°F. Coat a 9x13-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Line the bottom and two long sides with a sheet of parchment paper.
2. Prepare 1 (15.25-ounce) box chocolate cake mix by mixing in the water, eggs, and oil as listed on the package directions along with 1 1/2 teaspoons instant espresso powder if using. Pour into the baking pan and smooth out the top.

3. Process 2 pounds whole-milk ricotta cheese, 3/4 cup granulated sugar, 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar, 3 large eggs, 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, and 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt in a food processor until well-combined and smooth, about 30 seconds. Pour evenly over the cake batter, covering the cake batter completely.
4. Bake until the batters have flipped — the chocolate cake will have risen to the surface — and a tester inserted into the center comes out clean, 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. It's OK if the cake has cracks or thin streaks of the ricotta mixture on the surface. Place the pan on a wire rack and let cool completely, about 2 1/2 hours.

Make the topping:

1. Whisk 1 (3.9-ounce) box instant chocolate pudding mix and 2 cups cold whole milk together in a large bowl until dissolved and the mixture is slightly thickened, about 2 minutes. Let sit for 1 minute to thicken. Fold 1 (8-ounce) container thawed Cool Whip with a flexible spatula until fully combined.
2. Spoon over the cooled cake and smooth or swoop over the top as desired. Loosely cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate until the topping is set and chilled before serving, at least 4 hours and up to overnight.

Recipe Notes

Substitutions: 8 ounces Cool Whip can be substituted with 3 cups sweetened whipped cream.

Ingredient/Equipment Variations: The ricotta mixture can be prepared in a large bowl with an electric hand mixer or in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Note that the mixture will not be as smooth and pourable as when made in a food processor.

Storage: Leftover cake can be refrigerated tightly wrapped in its pan or in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

Recipe Courtesy of The Kitchen/Kayla Hoang