



Mocha Dacquoise Noel

The Story in a Slice

This cake is a story. My friend Margot made it every Christmas. She called it her “fancy nap.” You work, then you wait. Then you work again. I still laugh at that. The layers are crisp, then creamy, then rich. Each bite has a little history.

It looks grand, but it’s just nuts, eggs, and chocolate. Good things take time. That’s the first lesson here. What’s a dessert your family waits all year for? I’d love to hear.

Whispering to Egg Whites

The meringue is the foundation. You whip egg whites into soft clouds. Add sugar slowly. It’s like building a strong, sweet house. Fold in the

ground nuts gently. You must be kind to the fluff.

Then you mist it with water. This keeps it from cracking. The oven does the rest, low and slow. You must not peek! The wait makes it crisp outside, chewy inside. *Fun fact: the word “dacquoise” comes from a town in France. It just means a nut meringue cake.*

The Heart of the Matter

Next is the buttercream. It starts as a pastry cream. You cook egg yolks and milk until thick. This step matters. It gives the frosting a rich taste, not just sweetness. It reminds you of custard.

Then you beat in soft butter. The amaretto and espresso go in. Doesn't that smell amazing? It becomes fluffy and coffee-kissed. This buttercream holds the cake together. It's the glue and the joy. Do you prefer coffee or vanilla flavors in your treats?

Building a Little Tower

Now, the fun part. You cut the big meringue into rectangles. Spread ganache on three pieces. Ganache is just cream and chocolate melted together. It sets firm and shiny.

Then you stack. Meringue, buttercream, meringue, like a delicious sandwich. You frost the whole tower. This is where it becomes real. The cake chills to set. This waiting matters too. It lets the flavors get friendly with each other.

The Shiny Chocolate Coat

The final magic is the glaze. You warm the leftover ganache. Pour it

right over the cold cake. It flows like a chocolate waterfall. Spread it thin over the top and sides.

It hardens into a beautiful shell. Then, press nuts onto the sides. It gets one last long chill. This makes slicing clean. What's your favorite part: making a dessert, or sharing it?

See also Apricot Cherry Pecan Stuffed Pork Loin

Why We Make This

This cake is not for a Tuesday. It's for a special day. The work is an act of love. You make it for people you cherish. The layers show care. The time shows patience.

Every slice has crunch, smoothness, and deep flavor. It is a celebration. That's the second lesson. Food made with slow steps tastes better. It holds the story of your kitchen that day. And that is the sweetest thing of all.

Ingredients:

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Blanched sliced almonds	3/4 cup + 1 cup	Toasted; 3/4 cup for meringue, 1 cup for garnish
Hazelnuts	1/2 cup + 12 whole	Toasted and skinned; 1/2 cup for meringue, 12 for garnish
Cornstarch	1 tbsp + 1 1/2 tsp	1 tbsp for meringue, 1 1/2 tsp for buttercream
Salt	1/8 tsp + 1/4 tsp	1/8 tsp for meringue, 1/4 tsp for buttercream

Ingredient	Amount	Notes
Sugar	1 cup (7 oz) + 1/3 cup (2 1/3 oz)	1 cup for meringue, 1/3 cup for buttercream
Egg whites	4 large	Room temperature; for meringue
Cream of tartar	1/4 tsp	For meringue
Whole milk	3/4 cup	For buttercream
Egg yolks	4 large	For buttercream
Amaretto or water	2 tbsp	For buttercream
Instant espresso powder	1 1/2 tbsp	For buttercream
Unsalted butter	16 tbsp	Softened; for buttercream
Bittersweet chocolate	6 oz	Chopped fine; for ganache
Heavy cream	3/4 cup	For ganache
Corn syrup	2 tsp	For ganache



Mocha Dacquoise Noel

Instructions

Step 1: First, let's make the nutty meringue base. Heat your oven to 250 degrees. Draw a big rectangle on some parchment paper. Flip it over on a greased sheet. Grind the toasted almonds and hazelnuts with cornstarch and salt. It should smell like a cozy bakery. Now, whip your egg whites until foamy. Slowly add the sugar and keep whipping. You want shiny, stiff peaks. Gently fold in the nut mixture. Spread it evenly inside your drawn lines. Give it a little mist of water. This helps it get crisp. Bake for an hour and a half. Then, let it cool in the turned-off oven. Don't peek! (A little water spray keeps the top from cracking.)

Step 2: Next, we'll make the silky buttercream. Warm the milk until it just simmers. Whisk the yolks, sugar, cornstarch, and salt together. Now, this is important. Slowly add some hot milk to the yolks while whisking. This is called tempering. It keeps the eggs from scrambling. Pour it all back into the pot. Cook until it's thick like pudding. Let this pastry cream chill completely. Later, beat the soft butter until it's fluffy. Mix in the cold pastry cream, bit by bit. Stir the espresso powder into amaretto. Add that in and beat until it's dreamy and light.

See also Remys Festive Winter Tart

Step 3: Time for the simple chocolate ganache. Put your chopped chocolate in a bowl. Heat the cream and corn syrup until simmering. Pour the hot cream over the chocolate. Let it sit for a full minute. Then stir until it's perfectly smooth. Let it cool slightly. It should coat a spoon nicely. Now, let's assemble our cake. Carefully cut your big meringue into four smaller rectangles. Place three on a rack. Spread a thin layer of ganache on each. Pop them in the fridge to set. Doesn't that chocolate smell amazing?

Step 4: Let's build our beautiful layers. Take the plain meringue rectangle. Spread it with a good layer of buttercream. Place it on your rack. Invert a ganache-coated piece on top. Press gently. Add more buttercream, then another coated piece. Keep going until you have a stack. Now, frost the whole outside with the remaining buttercream. Make it smooth like a little gift box. Chill it until the frosting is firm. This patience is the hardest part! I still laugh at how I used to rush this. What's your favorite part of baking: mixing, assembling, or tasting? Share below!

Step 5: Finally, the glossy chocolate coat. Gently warm the leftover ganache until it's pourable. Place your cake on a rack over a tray. Pour the ganache over the top. Let it drip down the sides. Use a spatula to spread it thinly. It's okay if the sides aren't perfect. Press toasted hazelnuts on top and almonds on the sides. Chill for several hours. To slice, dip your knife in hot water. Wipe it dry between each cut. This gives you perfect, clean slices. Your masterpiece is ready to share.

Creative Twists

This cake is wonderful as written. But sometimes, a little change is fun. Here are three simple ideas. **Orange Zest:** Add a teaspoon of orange zest to the buttercream. Chocolate and orange are a happy pair. **Mocha Chips:** Fold mini chocolate chips into the meringue nut mix. You get little chocolate surprises in every bite. **Peppermint Sparkle:** Swap the amaretto for peppermint extract. Garnish with crushed candy canes for a holiday feel. Which one would you try first? Comment below!

See also Caramelized Banana Christmas Delight

Serving & Pairing Ideas

This cake is rich, so small slices are perfect. Serve it on simple white plates. A few fresh raspberries on the side look lovely. They add a nice, tart bite. For a drink, a cup of strong black coffee is classic. It balances the sweetness. For a special night, a small glass of tawny port wine is lovely. Its nutty flavor matches the hazelnuts. For a cozy treat, try warm milk with a dash of vanilla. Which would you choose tonight?



Mocha Dacquoise Noel

Keeping Your Dacquoise Delicious

This cake is a special treat. You will want to save some for later. Wrap the whole cake tightly in plastic wrap. Then, pop it in the fridge for up to three days. The flavors get even better the next day.

You can also freeze it for a month. Wrap it well in plastic and then foil. Thaw it overnight in the fridge before serving. I once forgot a slice in the freezer for weeks. It was still a lovely surprise for a Tuesday.

Batch cooking the meringue is a smart move. Make two rectangles and freeze one for next time. This saves you hours of work later. Having a dessert ready in the freezer matters. It means you are always ready for a celebration.

Have you ever tried storing a fancy cake this way? Share your stories below!

Fixing Common Little Hiccups

Is your meringue sticky or chewy? The oven might be too hot. Always use an oven thermometer to check. I remember when my meringue wept in the oven. My old oven ran too hot, you see.

Is your buttercream looking curdled? Do not worry. Your butter or pastry cream was likely too cold. Just keep beating on medium speed. It will become smooth and fluffy again.

Is the ganache too thick to pour? Gently warm it over a bowl of hot water. Stir it until it is just fluid. Fixing these small issues builds your confidence. It also makes sure every bite tastes perfect.

Which of these problems have you run into before in your kitchen?

Your Quick Questions, Answered

Q: Is this recipe gluten-free?

A: Yes, it is. The meringue uses nuts and cornstarch, not flour.

Q: Can I make it ahead?

A: Absolutely. You can assemble the whole cake two days before serving.

Q: What if I don't have amaretto?

A: Use water or a teaspoon of vanilla. The coffee flavor will still shine.

Q: Can I make a smaller cake?

A: You can halve the recipe. Just bake the meringue in a smaller rectangle.

Q: Any optional tips?

A: A pinch of salt in the ganache makes the chocolate taste richer. *Fun fact: This is called "flavor layering."

Which of these tips will you try first in your kitchen?

With Love From My Kitchen

I hope you enjoy making this beautiful cake. It is a labor of love, just like you. Share it with people who make you smile. I would love to hear all about your baking adventure.

Have you tried this recipe? Tell me all about it in the comments below. I read every single one.



Happy cooking!
—Elowen Thorn.



MOCHA DACQUOISE NOEL



Mocha Dacquoise Noel