

Vegan Chocolate Beet Cake

Makes one 8 or 9-inch layer cake

2 medium beets, peeled and trimmed of their greens
1 teaspoon oil (I prefer melted coconut oil.)
3/4 cup vegan butter, plus more for greasing the pans
1 cup packed brown sugar
3/4 cup granulated sugar
2 flax eggs *
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting the pans
2/3 cup unsweetened natural cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups vegan buttermilk **



*To make one flax egg, combine 1 Tbs. ground flax meal with 3 Tbs. water. Let it chill in the fridge for about 30 minutes or until it turns into a gel-like consistency. Since this recipe calls for 2 flax eggs, combine 2 Tbs. ground flax meal with 6 Tbs. water.

**To make 1 1/4 cups buttermilk, combine about 1/4 + 1/8 cups white vinegar with 1 1/8 cups non-dairy milk. I prefer to use a nut milk like almond or cashew milk. Let this mixture sit for about 5 minutes until it begins to look the milk is slightly curdled.

Place a rack in the center and upper third of the oven. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Place washed, peeled, and trimmed beets in a piece of foil. Drizzle with just a bit of oil. Seal up foil. Place on a baking sheet in the oven. Roast until beets are tender when pierced with a knife, about 1 hour.

Remove the beets from the oven. Open the foil and allow beets to cool completely.

Using a box grater, grate the peeled beets on the finest grating plane until you have 3/4 cup. Alternatively, you can accomplish this with a food processor. You will probably have some left over. Set aside.

Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees F. Use vegan butter to grease two 8 or 9-inch round baking pans. Trace a piece of parchment paper so it is the same size as the bottom of the cake pan. Cut it out and place inside the cake pan. Butter the parchment paper. Add a dusting of flour to coat the pan. Set pans aside while you prepare the cake.

In the bowl of an electric stand mixer, fitted with a paddle attachment, cream together vegan butter and sugars. Beat on medium speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 to 5 minutes. Beat in

flax eggs, one at a time, for one minute after each addition. Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides of the bowl as necessary. Once flax eggs are incorporated, beat in beets and vanilla extract until thoroughly combined.

In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.

Add half of the dry ingredients to the butter and egg mixture. Beating on low speed, slowly adding the buttermilk. Once just incorporated, add the other half of the dry ingredients. Beat on medium speed until milk and dry ingredients are just incorporated. Try not to overmix the batter. Bowl can be removed from the mixer and mixture folded with a spatula to finish incorporating ingredients. Cake batter will be on the thick side.

Divide the batter between the two prepared cake pans. Bake for 23 to 25 minutes (for a 9-inch pan) or 30-32 minutes (for an 8-inch pan). Cake is done when a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove cakes from the oven and allow to rest for 10 minutes. Invert cakes onto a cooling rack to cool completely before frosting and assembling the cake.

Vegan Chocolate Frosting

1 cup vegan butter, softened

2 1/2 - 3 cups powdered sugar

2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder

1/4 cup dairy-free semisweet chocolate, melted and slightly cooled (optional)

2 tsp pure vanilla extract

~1/4 cup non-dairy milk (I prefer almond or cashew milk.)

Prepare frosting by beating together all ingredients until light and fluffy, adding the powdered sugar in small amounts until you reach your desired consistency and sweetness. If it becomes too thick, add more almond milk. If it's too thin, add more cocoa powder or powdered sugar.

Putting it all together...

One jar of raspberry jam (or any other jam/preserves you like)

Variety of berries, i.e. strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries

Cover the top of one of the cooled cake layers with an even coating of raspberry jam. This will act as the “glue”. Gently place the second layer on top of it.

Create a “crumb-coat” by applying a thin layer of icing all over the cake to seal in any crumbs. Then, apply a thicker layer of icing for the top coat. Arrange your berries in a mandala design on top of the cake, and **voilà!**