

## CLASSIC CHOCOLATE CAKE

*When I think of iconic chocolate cakes, I think of the story of Matilda by Roald Dahl. Remember that little boy, Bruce Bogtrotter, who was made to eat an entire chocolate cake by the feared Head Mistress, Miss Trunchbull? Dahl describes it vividly:*

*"It was a chocolate cake. It was very rich and very dark. The icing was thick and dark brown, nearly black. In fact, it was the colour of wet road mud. It was a huge cake, about eighteen inches across, and Miss Trunchbull had it brought in on a flat board and placed on the central table."*

*Yeah. That's the cake I wanted to create (and eat!): stackable yet tender; rich but not overbearing; totally indulgent. This is that cake. Iconic and delicious.*

### *The Ingredients*

1 cup of buttermilk  
½ cup of vegetable oil  
2 large eggs, at room temperature  
1 tablespoon real vanilla extract  
2 cups of granulated sugar  
1¾ cups of all-purpose flour  
¾ cup of unsweetened cocoa powder  
1½ teaspoons baking powder  
1½ teaspoons baking soda  
1 teaspoon fine sea salt  
1 cup of boiling water

### *The Method*

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease and flour the bottom and sides of your pan or pans, and line with parchment paper if desired.
2. In a bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, oil, eggs, and vanilla. Set aside.
3. In the bowl of a heavy-duty mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, add the sugar, flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Mix until fully incorporated. With the mixer on low, pour in the buttermilk mixture. Once combined, increase the speed to medium and mix for 2 minutes. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl. With the mixer on low, slowly pour in the boiling water and continue to mix on low until well blended, rescraping the sides and bottom if needed, about 30 seconds. Divide the batter evenly into your pan (or

pans) of choice and bake at 350°F. Two 9"-inch cake rounds will bake for 32-35 minutes. A 9x13"-inch pan will take 35-40 minutes to bake. A half-sheet pan will bake in 17-20 minutes. This recipe will also make 18 large or 24 small cupcakes, which will bake for 18 minutes or 15 minutes, respectively. Can you tell we make this a lot?

### *Tips*

- Yes, the batter is more runny than you're used to, but shelve your doubt. That's how it's supposed to be. It will turn out!
- If you forget, as I do, to remove your eggs from the fridge until you need them, and they are cold, simply place them in a bowl and add warm water. Let them sit a few minutes, and they'll come to room temperature before you know it.
- As a rule of thumb, I either refrigerate or freeze my unfrosted cakes after they have cooled and before they are frosted. This gives the cake's crumb time to rest, and all of those gorgeous ingredients will mellow together. Just make sure your layers are well wrapped in plastic wrap to prevent any unwanted odor transfers from the fridge or any freezer burn from affecting the flavor of your cake.
- Don't forget the [Chocolate Cream Cheese Buttercream](#) frosting! If you prefer a little lighter textured topping, grab your favorite frosting tip and try piping on this delicious [Whipped Cream Topping](#) instead.





