

Bûche de Noël (Yule Log)

Make the cake

Prepare a 15.5" x 10.5" x 1" jelly roll pan: grease the bottom only and line with waxed paper or parchment, then grease the paper.

Sift and set aside:

- ¾ C flour
- 5 T cocoa
- ¼ t salt

Beat til thick and lemon-colored:

- 4 egg yolks
- ½ C sugar
- ¼ C water
- 1-1/2 t vanilla

Gently fold in dry ingredients until well blended. Set aside.

Beat until frothy: 4 egg whites

Add, beating slightly: ½ t cream of tartar

Add gradually, beating well after each addition: ½ C sugar

Beat till rounded peaks and eggwhites do not slide when bowl is tipped. Gently spread yolk mixture over whites. Carefully fold together until blended. Turn batter into pan and spread evenly to edges. Bake at 325 for 30 minutes, until it springs back when lightly touched.

Immediately loosen the edges with a sharp knife, turn onto a clean towel sprinkled with powdered sugar. Remove the wax paper and cut off crisp edges, if any, of cake.

To roll: roll the nearest edge longwise: using the towel as a guide, tightly grasp the nearest edge and roll it over the opposite edge. Cake will roll itself. Wrap the cake in the towel and set on a rack to cool.

Prepare Filling (alternate: prepare thick whipped cream)

Scaled in top of double boiler: 1-1/2 C milk

Sift together in saucepan:

- ½ C sugar
- 2 T cornstarch
- 1/8 t salt

Add, stirring well, ½ C cold milk.

Gradually stir mixture into scalded milk. Stirring gently and constantly, bring mixture rapidly to a boil over direct heat and cook 3 minutes. Pour into the top of a double boiler and place over simmering water. Cover and cook 10-12 minutes, stirring 3 or 4 times.

Remove cover and vigorously stir 3T of the hot mixture into 3 well-beaten eggs. Immediately blend that back into the mixture. Cook over simmering water for 3-5 minutes, stirring slowly to keep it cooking evenly.

Remove from heat, cover. When cool, stir in 2 t vanilla extract and chill until ready to use.

Prepare frosting

Cream ½ C butter

Add gradually, beating smooth after each addition:

3 C powdered sugar
a few grains of salt

Mix in, in order:

3 T cream
1 egg yolk
1-1/4 t vanilla
2 squares (2 oz) of melted chocolate

Set aside.

Assemble the “log”

When ready to fill, carefully unroll the cooled cake and spread evenly with cream filling or whipped cream. Carefully re-roll the cake and frost it.

Diagonally cut the ends. Arrange the cut pieces on the side and top to look like branches. Frost the “branches.” Use a fork to make “bark” lines in the frosting.

Chill the cake up to 1 hour.

Garnish with meringue mushrooms, holly or other greenery (do NOT use holly berries, which are toxic, and do not eat holly leaves), and candied cherries. Meringue mushrooms may be purchased but they are easy and fun to make, and can be made ahead. There are many recipes on the internet.