Dobos Torte

Make-ahead · Holiday · Makes 16 slices

Ken's note: TBD

Mom's Dobos torte, revised. The Hungarian classic: seven thin cake layers, chocolate buttercream, and a caramel-glazed top scored into wedges. Amounts are about 1½ times the traditional recipe so there's plenty of batter, filling and glaze.

Ingredients

Cake

- 3 sticks unsalted butter, softened
- 1½ cups sugar
- 6 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1½ tsp vanilla extract
- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour

Filling

- 2 cups sugar
- scant ½ tsp cream of tartar
- 1 cup water
- 12 egg yolks
- ¾ cup dark cocoa (Hershey's Special Dark)
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 6 sticks unsalted butter, cool but not too cold

Glaze

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup water

Method

1. **Cake.** Heat the oven to 350°F. Weigh the empty mixer bowl. Cream the butter and sugar with the paddle, mix in the eggs and vanilla, then the flour, until smooth and firm. Weigh the bowl again; subtract the empty weight and divide by 7 for the batter per layer.
2. Butter and flour as many 9-inch round pans as you have, covering the bottom and the lower ½ inch of the sides. Spread one portion of batter evenly in each pan with a metal spatula. Bake about 8 minutes, until the surface is dry and the edge is lightly browned. Rest 1 minute, loosen, and invert onto a rack. Clean, butter and flour the pans and repeat until you have 7 layers. Pick the best-looking layer for the top.
3. **Filling.** Stir the sugar, cream of tartar and water over low heat until dissolved, then boil without stirring to 238°F (soft ball). Meanwhile, whisk the yolks at medium speed 3–4 minutes, until thick and pale. On low, pour in the hot syrup in a slow, steady stream, then beat at medium until it cools to about room temperature and turns thick and smooth, about 10 minutes. Mix in the cocoa and vanilla on low, scraping the sides. Back at medium, add the butter in small pieces (20 or more per stick) until smooth and glossy. Finish by hand with a scraper, then a quick whisk. Chill briefly while you make the glaze; don't let it get too stiff to spread.
4. **Glaze.** Set the top layer on a rack over a baking sheet (line it with parchment to save the drips). Cook the sugar and water in a small heavy saucepan over medium heat without stirring, swirling now and then, until rich amber. Pour over the top layer, wait 1 minute, then score into 16 wedges with a slightly wet long knife, pressing deep without cutting through.
5. **Assemble.** Spread about ¾ cup filling (about ⅛ inch) on a layer on the serving plate. Stack the remaining plain layers the same way, finishing with filling and then the glazed top. Cover the sides with filling, press on hazelnuts if using, and pipe decorations with leftover filling. Chill at least 2 hours. Slice along the scored lines.
6. **Tools:** stand mixer (paddle and whisk), kitchen scale, candy thermometer, offset spatula, 9-inch cake pans, cooling racks, piping set, long knife.

Notes

Optional. toasted chopped hazelnuts for the sides