Chocolate Fudge Birthday Cake

Adapted from *Food & Wine*
Makes one 8 Inch Layer Cake

Ingredients

Cake:
1 3/4 cup all purpose flour, plus more for dusting
2 cups granulated sugar
3/4 cup good quality unsweetened cocoa
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup canola oil
2 large organic eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup freshly brewed coffee

Double-Batch Frosting:
12 ounces good quality bittersweet or semisweet chocolate
4 sticks (1 pound) unsalted butter, room temperature
2 1/2 cups confectioner's sugar, sifted
2 teaspoons vanilla
2 tablespoons instant espresso granules

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Liberally butter two 8 inch cake pans.
Line bottoms of the pans with circles of parchment paper.
Press down paper and turn over so that buttered side faces up.
Flour the pans--make sure to coat the sides as well as the bottom and then tap out any excess.

In bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle, mix together dry ingredients.
Add flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda and powder, and salt to the bowl and blend on low speed.
Alternatively, you can make batter in a large bowl with a hand mixer.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, oil, eggs, and vanilla.

Slowly add buttermilk mixture to dry ingredients on low speed, until well mixed.
Pour in freshly brewed coffee and mix until just incorporated.

Divide the batter evenly between two prepared cake pans.
Bake in center of oven for 35 minutes, or until a cake tester inserted in center of cake comes out clean.
Switch the pan positions once midway, to ensure even baking.
Remove pans from oven and place on a rack to cool for 30 minutes.
Invert cakes onto rack and peel off parchment paper.

Finely chop chocolate and melt over barely simmering water in a double boiler, until smooth and glossy.
When completely melted, let the chocolate cool to room temperature.

Beat room temperature butter in stand mixer (or using a hand mixer) until it is pale and fluffy.
Slowly add confectioner's sugar on low speed and beat until incorporated.

Dissolve instant espresso in 4 teaspoons hot water and add the vanilla; mix into melted chocolate.
Add chocolate to butter and sugar and beat until just combined.

Place a cake layer on a cake plate with the flat side up.
Slide strips of parchment paper under edge of cake to catch any drippings as you frost the cake.
Using an icing spatula, spread some of frosting over top of the cake layer.
Place the second cake layer on top of the first, flat side down.
Spread more of the frosting over top of the cake, smoothing it down along the sides as well.
Use icing spatula to pile on remaining frosting and thickly layer it over top of cake and along the sides.

To decorate the cake, use the back of a spoon to coax the frosting into curls all over, like a meringue.
When finished decorating, carefully remove the strips of parchment paper.

Refrigerate for at least one hour to allow the frosting to set.
Before serving, let the cake come to room temperature before serving.