

Pumpkin Cake with Chocolate Ganache and Salted Caramel Cream Cheese Frosting

<http://userealbutter.com/2012/10/08/pumpkin-chocolate-salt-caramel-cake-recipe/> based on [this recipe](#) from Food and Wine

pumpkin cake (modified for two 9-inch pans, see original recipe for 8-inch pans)

3 cups flour
3 3/8 tsp baking powder (2 tsp at 8500 ft)
1 1/8 tsp baking soda (1 tsp at 8500 ft)
1 1/2 tsp salt
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
1 1/2 tsp ground ginger
3/4 tsp nutmeg, freshly grated
3/8 tsp ground cloves
1 7/8 cups light brown sugar
6 eggs
1 1/8 cups vegetable oil
22 oz pumpkin purée (10 15-oz cans)
3/4 cup milk

salted caramel cream cheese frosting

1 lb cream cheese, softened
2 oz unsalted butter, softened
8 oz salted caramel sauce
4 cups confectioner's sugar

chocolate ganache

4 oz semi-sweet dark chocolate, chopped
5 oz heavy cream

Make the pumpkin cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter and flour two 9-inch round baking pans (I used 9x3-inch pans). Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and cloves together. Set aside. Place the light brown sugar and eggs in a mixing bowl and beat on medium until fluffy. Beat in the oil and the pumpkin purée. Alternate adding half of the dry ingredients to the batter with half of the milk and mix until blended. Repeat with remaining halves of the dry ingredients and the milk. Pour half of the batter into each baking pan and bake for 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. It took me 50 minutes. Remove the cakes from the oven and let cool in their baking pans for 20 minutes. Invert the cakes onto cooling racks.

Make the salted caramel cream cheese frosting: Place the softened cream cheese and butter into the bowl of a stand mixer and beat until creamy with a paddle attachment. Scrape the sides down and beat the frosting a few times. Mix in the salted caramel sauce. Add the confectioner's sugar a cup at a time, first mixing it slowly (it puffs about) and then beating it in on high speed. Repeat until all of the sugar is mixed in. Set aside, or if the cream cheese frosting is very runny, place in the refrigerator.

Make the chocolate ganache: Place the chocolate in a small or medium bowl. Heat the cream until it begins to simmer and steam, then remove from heat and pour over the chocolate. Let the cream sit for a few minutes, then stir the chocolate and cream together until a smooth, shiny ganache forms. Set aside (but don't let the ganache cool and harden).

Assemble the cake: Trim any domed tops off both cakes and discard (or eat them). Slice each cake into two layers of similar thickness. Set a base layer down (the bottom of one of the cakes will be on the bottom — reserve the other bottom for the top) on top of a cake board or on strips of wax paper underlying the edges of the cake. Spread a third of the chocolate ganache on the cake, then spread a half cup (or more) of the salted caramel cream cheese frosting over the ganache. Gently set a second layer of cake on the base layer and repeat. For the last cake layer, which should be a bottom layer, invert it so the cut side is face down and the base is on the top of the cake. Spread a thin layer of the cream cheese frosting around the sides (crumb coat), then frost the entire cake. Garnish as you like with chocolate shavings, candied nuts, drizzle of caramel or chocolate. Serves 10-12. Store covered in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.