



## Chocolate Olive Oil Cake

### INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing the pan
- 5 eggs, separated
- 8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 cup sugar, divided
- 1 tablespoon orange zest, plus 2 tablespoons juice
- ½ teaspoon sea salt or kosher salt
- Powdered sugar for dusting, optional

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Brush the bottom and sides of a 9-inch cake pan with oil, or spray with baking spray. Line bottom of pan with parchment, and oil or spray the paper.
2. Place the egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer. Place the egg yolks in a small bowl.
3. Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over simmering water. Remove from heat and add the sugar, stirring to dissolve. Whisk in the olive oil, half the sugar, the orange zest and juice, salt, and egg yolks. Set aside.
4. Beat the egg whites on high speed with the whisk attachment until they form soft peaks. Slowly beat in the remaining half cup of sugar and beat until the whites are stiff, but not dry. Stir 1/3 of the whites into the chocolate mixture to lighten the base, then very gently fold in the remaining whites. Pour the batter into the cake pan and twist the pan gently to level the batter in the pan. Bake for 40 minutes. Remove the pan to a rack. The top will crack as it cools. Cool for 15 minutes, then remove the cake from the pan to cool further. The top crust will be crunchy, while the interior will be rich and creamy. Dust with powdered sugar, if desired.

## Waste Not, Waistline

IT DOESN'T START WITH Thanksgiving, but around November it goes into high gear. By Christmas, it reaches a crescendo. I'm talking about my consumption of butter. I buy copious amounts, worried that I'll run out while basting a turkey, browning vegetables, or baking. At any one time, I have a few disks of dough in the freezer, ready to defrost and roll into pie crusts. My personal security blanket. Never mind that this blanket must cover the additional pounds that this butter was adding. I joined the legions of people who vow to cut back at the start of the new year, secretly knowing that this vow would end before the first week of the year ended.

I was asked to bring dessert for a potluck party to usher in 2024. I had reams of recipes scattered across my table. I could make a fruit dessert; maybe a pavlova filled with custard and whipped cream. Maybe some crème brûlée that I would caramelize right before serving. Or maybe baked Alaska...three layers of rich ice cream encased by meringue. What drama if I ignited it and brought it, blazing, to the table. Visions of sugar plums

didn't dance in my head. My *pas de deux* was leaning toward butter and eggs.

So, I was caught off guard when the hostess requested "something sweet, of course, but light." She said she and several other women and men she knew were cutting back. Did they have to cut back on my time to shine? I had to shift gears.

What could I make that would elicit a big smile, not a groan. What would satisfy, not multi-ify? It still had to be festive, after all. I kept coming back to chocolate. Even the word sounds rich and fancy. Chocolate as a health food? Why not? It's rich in iron and antioxidants. Studies have shown that it improves brain health and lowers fatigue. Certainly, it improves your mood.


And olive oil? It's the star of the Mediterranean diet. High in monosaturated fat, it lowers the "bad" cholesterol, as well as blood pressure. It's also gentle on the digestive system...a special benefit after the party-hearty months. So, my friends, waste not this dessert. Your vow of healthy eating is safe and your waistline is intact. 



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