

GATEAU DE PÂQUES/CHOCOLATE EASTER CAKE

Yields approximately 28 small cakes when baked in standard mini-muffin tins or similar sized silicone flexi-molds. There are many multi-well silicone molds available in pleasing shapes. Yields will vary depending on molds used.

Ingredients

- 200 g / 7 ounces dark chocolate, in discs or chopped
- 200 g / 7 ounce (14 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cubed
- 4 large eggs, separated
- 3/4 cup / 150 g cane sugar
- 100 g / 3/4 cup all purpose flour
- pinch salt

1. Heat oven to 350°F (325°F convection).
2. Butter and flour muffin tins (not necessary with silicone molds). If using silicone molds, place them on a wire grid on a 1/2 sheet pan - this makes for a more even bake as the oven heat can circulate around the molds.
3. Melt the chocolate and butter gently in a medium heatproof bowl over a *bain marie* on low heat, stirring every few minutes with a heatproof spatula until smooth and shiny. Remove from heat and let cool for 5-10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile separate the 4 eggs and whisk the yolks with the sugar for several minutes until pale and thickened.
5. Blend the chocolate/butter into the yolk/sugar mixture.
6. Sift in the flour and fold in gently with a spatula.
7. In a clean bowl whisk the egg whites with a pinch of salt to soft peaks then incorporate delicately into the above mixture.
8. Scoop or pipe the batter into prepared molds, filling them about 3/4 full.
9. Bake about 15-20 minutes, checking half way through, until the tops appear to be slightly dry and cracked. NOTE: shorter bake will result in a more gooey center; longer more firm.
10. Remove from oven and cool on wire racks about 15 minutes before gently turning out of the pans or molds.

Create your own holiday tea cake treats with different garnishes: a simple whipped *ganache* topped with a fresh raspberry; whipped mascarpone cream with lightly toasted chopped pistachios and pomegranate arils; dip tops in caramel sauce and sprinkle with chocolate cookie crumbs. Use your imagination!

Quality chocolates are available via World Wide Chocolate in New Hampshire or at kitchen shops such as Sur La Table and Williams Sonoma as well as many supermarkets: Guittard, Lindt, Ghirardelli are just a few.

Visit bakedeco.com to find all manner of baking and pastry supplies. Silikomart is my favorite brand of multi-well silicone molds, available in many shapes and sizes.