



Chocolate Beet Sheet Cake with Ganache

Serves a crowd

This cake is a real showstopper, with a light dusting of beet powder gracing the top. You can order the beet powder from Kalustyan's, but I recently saw it being sold at CVS in the nutritional supplement aisle, and you can get it [here](#) on Amazon! It still looks pretty spectacular without it too. The beets in the batter keep the sweetness in check, add a note of earthiness, and keep the cake moist. If you want to make this cake for a smaller crowd, bake the whole cake, cut it in half, and freeze half. Halve the ganache recipe for the top.

For the cake:

- 2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened, plus more for the pan
- 3 large (baseball-size) red beets (about 1 ½ pounds trimmed, to make 2 cups puree)
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, plus more for cooking the beets
- 2 ¼ cups/452g granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup/71g unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
- 2 ½ cups/341g all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda

For the ganache:

- 1 cup heavy cream

- 6 ounces/170g bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons corn syrup

To decorate:

- Chocolate curls (procedure below)
- [Beet powder](#) (optional)

-
1. Set an oven rack to the center rack and preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9x13-inch cake pan, line with parchment paper, then grease the bottom of the paper with butter.
 2. In a large saucepan, cover the beets with water, lightly salt it, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to maintain a brisk simmer and cook until a paring knife easily slips into a beet, 30 to 50 minutes (or longer if necessary), depending on size and freshness of beets. Let rest in the hot water for 10 minutes, drain, and cover with cold water. When cool enough to handle, slip the skins off the beets under the water (which will lessen any hand staining) and cut into chunks. Place in a food processor and process until very smooth. Measure out 2 cups of the puree and set aside until cooled. Discard any excess.
 3. In a stand mixer, cream the butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then beat in the sour cream. Add the beet puree and vanilla and mix well. It will look curdled and very pink at this point. Don't worry!
 4. In a large bowl, sift together the cocoa, flour, baking soda, and salt. Add the dry mixture to the wet ingredients in the mixer in two additions and beat on low speed until combined and smooth. Remove the bowl from the mixer and fold a few times to make sure it is thoroughly mixed.
 5. Spread evenly in the prepared pan and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, rotating halfway through the baking time, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then invert onto a cooling rack and cool completely. Peel off the paper and invert onto a serving platter.
 6. To make the ganache: Heat the cream in a small saucepan over medium heat until steaming and bubbling around the edges. Place the chocolate in a small bowl and pour the hot cream over it. Add the butter and corn syrup. Wait 5 minutes, then stir until smooth and glossy. Stir occasionally until it has cooled to a good spreading consistency, then spread over the top of the cake, not quite to the edges.
 7. Immediately top with chocolate curls (see below for how-to) and use a small sieve to lightly dust with beet powder (if using).

How to Make Chocolate Curls

Makes enough to decorate a full Chocolate Beet Sheet Cake—or to top pots de crème!

1. Chop 3 ounces/85g bittersweet chocolate and transfer all but a few pieces to a bone-dry microwave-able bowl. (You also could melt the chocolate over a double boiler.) Microwave on high for 1 minute, stir, and microwave in additional 10-second bursts until it is almost melted.
2. Add the reserved pieces of chocolate and stir constantly with a rubber spatula until melted and smooth. Transfer the chocolate to a clean, flat, uncoated baking sheet and use a bench scraper to smooth the chocolate out. Scrape it up again and smooth it out a few times until the chocolate is cool.
3. At this point, it should start to harden and dry before your eyes. When it looks almost dry and firm, push the baking sheet against the wall for leverage and scrape the chocolate away from you in small sections to form curls and shards.

Chocolate Curl Cooking Notes:

- If the chocolate doesn't harden and still looks wet, pop it in the freezer until almost hardened. Remove it and proceed as described above.
- If it is *too* hard, run your hand on the bottom of the sheet to warm it slightly and try again. The chocolate *does* have to be at the perfect temperature to work well, so there is a bit of trial and error involved. But funky shapes look great, so don't worry too much about it! You can always melt it and try again.
- Use a level, clean quarter sheet pan. If you only have a larger sheet pan, that's OK too, just cover about half the area of the pan with the chocolate so it's not spread too thin.
- You need a bench scraper to push the chocolate into curls. There's no wrong way to do this. Put the pan against the wall for leverage so you can push. If the chocolate gets too soft, pop it back in the freezer for a minute.
- A quick cheater's version is to spread the chocolate, freeze until hard, and then let soften until it's JUST RIGHT. If it's too cold, run your hand along the underside of the pan to help warm it up.

SAVE TIME: If all of this sounds like too much for you, you can just shave a block of chocolate using a vegetable peeler for a still-pretty if less dramatic look. (Try warming the chocolate with your hand before shaving for larger curls.)

Timing Tips for the Beet Sheet Cake:

- **Up to 2 days ahead:** Cook the beets and make the puree.
- **Up to 1 day ahead:** Bake the cake; make the chocolate curls and store in the freezer.
- **About 1 hour before serving:** Make the ganache, frost the cake, and decorate with the curls.
- **Just before serving:** Dust with the beet powder.

