



## DOBOS TORTE (DARING BAKER'S CHALLENGE: AUG 2009)

*The Dobos Torta is a five-layer sponge cake, filled with a rich chocolate buttercream and topped with thin wedges of caramel, although you may find variations with 6 to 12 layers. József C. Dobos, a Hungarian baker, invented it in 1885 and it rapidly became famous throughout Europe for both its extraordinary taste and its keeping properties. The recipe was a secret until Dobos retired in 1906 and gave the recipe to the Budapest Confectioners' and Gingerbread Makers' Chamber of Industry, providing that every member of the chamber can use it freely.*

### **Equipment**

- 2 baking sheets
- 9" (23cm) and 8" springform or cake tins, to be used as templates for circles
- 1 medium and 1 large mixing bowls
- sieve
- double boiler or a large heat-proof mixing bowl that fits snugly over a larger saucepan
- small saucepan
- whisk (you could use a balloon whisk for the entire cake, but an electric hand whisk or stand mixer will make life much easier)
- metal offset spatula
- sharp knife or sharp pizza cutter
- parchment paper
- 7 1/2" cardboard cake round or a cake stand
- optional: piping bag and tip

### **Prep times (estimates)**

**Sponge layers:** 20 mins prep, 40 mins cooking total if baking each layer individually.

**Buttercream:** 20 mins cooking. Cooling time for buttercream: about 1 hour plus 10 minutes after this to beat and divide.

**Caramel layer:** 10-15 minutes.

**Assembly of whole cake:** 20 minutes

### **Ingredients**

#### **Sponge cake layers**

- 6 large eggs at room temperature, separated
- 1 1/3 cups (162g) confectioner's (icing) sugar, divided
- 1 tsp (5ml) vanilla extract
- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp (112g) sifted cake flour (**substitute:** 95g plain flour + 17g corn flour (cornstarch) sifted together)
- pinch of salt

## Chocolate Buttercream

- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup (200g) caster sugar
- 4oz (110g) bakers chocolate or your favourite dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 2 sticks plus 2 tbsp (250g) unsalted butter, softened at room temperature

*Caution:* The cooking process for the buttercream will produce lightly-cooked eggs. If you fall into a vulnerable health group then you may wish to use an egg-less buttercream.

## Caramel topping

- 1 cup (200g) caster sugar
- 12 tbsp (180 ml) water
- 8 tsp (40 ml) lemon juice
- 1 tbsp neutral oil (e.g. grapeseed, rice bran, sunflower)
- 1 tbsp of softened butter for greasing the parchment paper

## Finishing touches

- a 7" cardboard round
- 12 whole hazelnuts, peeled and toasted
- ½ cup (50g) peeled and finely chopped hazelnuts

## Directions for the sponge layers:

*The sponge layers can be prepared in advance and stored interleaved with parchment and well-wrapped in the fridge overnight.*

1. Position the oven racks in the top and centre thirds of the oven and pre-heat to 400°F (200°C).
2. Cut 6 pieces of parchment paper to fit the baking sheets. Using the bottom of a 9" (23cm) springform tin as a template and a dark pencil or a pen, trace a circle on each of the papers, and turn them over (the circle should be visible from the other side, so that the graphite or ink doesn't touch the cake batter.)
3. Beat the egg yolks, 2/3 cup (81g) of the confectioner's (icing) sugar, and the vanilla in a medium bowl with a mixer on high speed until the mixture is thick, pale yellow and forms a thick ribbon when the beaters are lifted a few inches above the batter, about 3 minutes. (You can do this step with a balloon whisk if you don't have a mixer.)
4. In another bowl, using clean beaters, beat the egg whites until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in the remaining 2/3 cup (81g) of confectioner's (icing)sugar until the whites form stiff, shiny peaks. Using a large rubber spatula, stir about 1/4 of the beaten whites into the egg yolk mixture, and then fold in the remainder, leaving a few wisps of white visible. Combine the flour and salt. Sift half the flour over the eggs, and fold in; repeat with the remaining flour.
5. Line one of the baking sheets with a circle-marked paper. Using a small offset spatula, spread about ¾ cup of the batter in an even layer, filling in the traced circle on one baking sheet. Bake on the

top rack for 5 minutes, until the cake springs back when pressed gently in the centre and the edges are lightly browned. While this cake bakes, repeat the process on the other baking sheet, placing it on the centre rack. When the first cake is done, move the second cake to the top rack. Invert the first cake onto a flat surface and carefully peel off the paper. Slide the cake layer back onto the paper and let stand until cool. Rinse the baking sheet under cold running water to cool, and wipe it dry before lining with another sheet of parchment paper. Continue with the remaining papers and batter to make a total of six layers. Completely cool the layers. Using an 8" springform pan bottom or plate as a template, trim each cake layer into a neat round. A small, serrated knife is best for this task.

*Note from Gourmeted:* I used a small paring knife to trim the each cake layer.

### **Directions for the chocolate buttercream:**

This can be prepared in advance and kept chilled until required.

1. Prepare a double-boiler: quarter-fill a large saucepan with water and bring it to a boil.
2. Meanwhile, whisk the eggs with the sugar until pale and thickened, about 5 minutes. You can use a balloon whisk or electric hand mixer for this.
3. Fit bowl over the boiling water in the saucepan (water should not touch bowl) and lower the heat to a brisk simmer. Cook the egg mixture, whisking constantly, for 2-3 minutes until you see it starting to thicken a bit. Whisk in the finely chopped chocolate and cook, stirring, for another 2-3 minutes.
4. Scrape the chocolate mixture into a medium bowl and leave to cool to room temperature (very important). It should be quite thick and sticky in consistency.
5. When cool, beat in the soft butter, a small piece (about 2 tbsp or 30g) at a time. An electric hand mixer is great here, but it is possible to beat the butter in with a spatula if it is soft enough. You should end up with a thick, velvety chocolate buttercream. Chill while you make the caramel topping.

### **Directions for the caramel topping:**

1. Choose the best-looking cake layer for the caramel top. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and butter the paper. Place the reserved cake layer on the paper. Carefully cut the sponge layer into 12 equal wedges using a sharp paring knife.
2. Stir the sugar, water and lemon juice in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over a medium heat, stirring often to dissolve the sugar. Once dissolved into a smooth syrup, turn the heat up to high and boil without stirring, swirling the pan by the handle occasionally and washing down any sugar crystals on the sides of the pan with a wet brush until the syrup has turned into an amber-colored caramel.
3. The top layer is perhaps the hardest part of the whole cake so make sure you have an oiled, hot offset spatula ready. It's best if the cake layer is at room temperature when you pour the caramel, so that it does not set before you can spread it. Using the offset spatula, quickly spread the caramel evenly to the edge of the cake layer. Let cool until it begins to set, about 30 seconds, longer if it's a hot and humid in your kitchen. Using a well-oiled pizza cutter (re-oiling with a paper towel dampened with flavorless oil), cut through caramel into your previously cut wedges. Score lightly along the cut

first, then carefully slice deeper. Get a feel of the caramel and re-oil the cutter when it starts to stick. Cut around the caramel cake layer to remove any excess caramel.

## **Assembling the Dobos**

1. Divide the buttercream into six equal parts. If you refrigerated the buttercream, it would even be easier to divide it as it will solidify a little in the bowl and you can just 'cut' through it and put it in separate containers. If you refrigerate it, you might need about 10-15 minutes until it is softened enough for spreading.
2. Place a dab of chocolate buttercream on the middle of a 7 1/2" cardboard round or cake stand and top with one sponge cake layer. Spread the layer with one part of the chocolate icing. Repeat with 4 more cake layers. Spread the remaining icing on the sides of the cake.
3. *Optional:* press the finely chopped hazelnuts onto the sides of the cake.
4. Propping a hazelnut under each wedge so that it sits at an angle, arrange the wedges on top of the cake in a spoke pattern. If you have any leftover buttercream, you can pipe rosettes under each hazelnut or a large rosette in the centre of the cake. Refrigerate the cake under a cake dome until the icing is set, about 2 hours. Let slices come to room temperature for the best possible flavor.

## **Storage**

You can store the cake in the fridge, but I would highly recommend that you serve it at room temperature. It is best if you cut it cold, to show off defined layers, and then leave to soften for about 15 minutes before devouring. You can also serve it with crème fraîche. Note that if you put it in the fridge, the caramel wedges tend to 'melt' after 24 hours and it will start to drip down the cake.

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This recipe is brought to you by [Gourmeted.com](http://Gourmeted.com) and is based on **the August 2009 Daring Bakers' Challenge** recipe. It is provided with modifications based on personal experience. You can email us at [gourmeted@gmail.com](mailto:gourmeted@gmail.com) if you have questions. Photos of this delectable cake are available on our website: [August 28, 2009](#) and [September 7, 2009](#).