

# Southern Devil's Food Cake

## For the Cake:

6 oz. (3/4 cup) unsalted butter, softened; more for the pans  
8 oz. (1-3/4 cups) all-purpose flour; more for the pans  
2 cups packed dark brown sugar  
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract  
3 large eggs, at room temperature  
2-1/4 oz. (3/4 cup) unsweetened Dutch-processed cocoa powder  
1-1/4 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. baking powder  
1 tsp. kosher salt  
1-1/2 cups buttermilk, preferably low fat, at room temperature  
1/4 cup mayonnaise

## For the Ganache:

1 lb. semisweet chocolate (preferably 58% cacao), finely chopped  
2 cups heavy cream  
1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter, softened

## Directions:

### Make the Ganache:

Put the chopped chocolate in a medium bowl. Bring the cream to a boil in a 2-quart saucepan over medium-high heat. Pour the hot cream directly over the chocolate and let it sit without stirring for 5 minutes. Using a whisk, stir in the center of the mixture in a small, tight circular motion until fully combined. Add the butter and stir until it is fully incorporated. Put a piece of plastic wrap directly onto the surface of the ganache and set aside at room temperature for at least 8 hours or overnight.

### Make the Cake:

Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 350°F. Butter two 8×2-inch round cake pans and line each with a parchment round. Butter the parchment, dust with flour, and tap out any excess. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, brown sugar, and vanilla on medium-high speed until lighter in color and slightly increased in volume, 3 to 5 minutes. Lower the speed to medium and add the eggs, one at a time, mixing until each is fully incorporated before adding the next. Sift the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and baking powder onto a piece of parchment. Add the salt to the dry ingredients after sifting. Using the parchment as a chute, add one-quarter of the dry ingredients to the batter and mix on low speed until incorporated. Add about 1/2 cup of the buttermilk and mix on low speed until incorporated. Continue to alternate dry ingredients and buttermilk, mixing until incorporated after each addition and stopping to scrape the bowl and beater as necessary. Using a whisk, fold the mayonnaise into the batter. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared pans and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cakes comes out clean and the sides of the cake have begun to pull away from the pan slightly, 40 to 45 minutes. Remove the pans from the oven and cool on a rack for 15 minutes. Invert the cakes onto the rack and remove the pans and parchment. Cool the cakes completely.

### Assemble the Cake:

With a serrated knife, cut each cake in half horizontally. Put one of the base layers on a cake plate and tuck strips of waxed paper under the cake to keep the plate clean while icing the cake. Top the cake with about 1/3 cup of the ganache, spreading it evenly over the top. Add another cake layer, top with ganache, and repeat until the last layer is in place.