

BAKING UP FAMILY TRADITIONS

Cookbook author and food personality Carla Hall learned to bake using recipes handed down to her by her grandmother, Freddie Mae. Among those recipes was one for Coca-Cola cake. Says Carla, “Cakes made with soda pop like 7 Up, Coca-Cola, and root beer were so popular in the South, and I just always assumed it was a thing everywhere,” says Carla. Hall honors her grandmother and the legacy of Black Southern bakers with this root beer cake. Spiced with star anise and crowned with root beer ganache, it’s a modern take on a Southern classic.



Root Beer Cake with Chocolate Root Beer Ganache

YIELD: ONE CAKE

Carla Hall’s riff on her grandmother’s Coca-Cola cake gives this classic a spicy twist.

INGREDIENTS

CAKE

2 ¼ cups (270g) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
1 cup (198g) granulated sugar
½ cup (106g) light brown sugar or dark brown sugar, packed
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon Vietnamese Cinnamon
1 teaspoon Nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground star anise
1 ½ cups (340g) root beer, flat or fizzy
16 tablespoons (227g) unsalted butter, room temperature
¼ cup (21g) Triple Cocoa Blend
2 large eggs, room temperature
½ cup (113g) buttermilk, at room temperature
1 teaspoon King Arthur Pure Vanilla Extract
1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger

GANACHE

¼ cup (57g) root beer, flat or fizzy
4 tablespoons (57g) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 ½ tablespoons (8g) Triple Cocoa Blend
2 cups (227g) confectioners’ sugar
¼ teaspoon Nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground star anise
¼ teaspoon salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 10-cup Bundt pan.
2. **For the cake:** In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugars, baking soda, salt, and spices. In a medium saucepan, bring the root beer, butter, and cocoa powder to a boil, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat, cool for 5 minutes, then mix into the flour mixture.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the eggs, buttermilk, and vanilla and stir into the flour mixture. Fold in the grated ginger.

4. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan and bake for 50 minutes, until the edge of the cake begins to pull away from the pan and a toothpick or paring knife inserted into the center comes out clean.
5. Remove the cake from the oven. Gently loosen it from the edge of the pan. Place a cooling rack on top and turn the cake and rack over. Wait 15 minutes, then carefully lift the pan off the cake, jiggling it gently first to make sure it’s not stuck.
6. **For the ganache:** In a small saucepan, bring the root beer to a boil over medium heat. Add the butter and cocoa powder, stirring until smooth. Pour the mixture into a large bowl, then whisk in the confectioners’ sugar, spices, and salt until smooth and glossy. While the ganache is still warm, pour it over top of the cake.





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