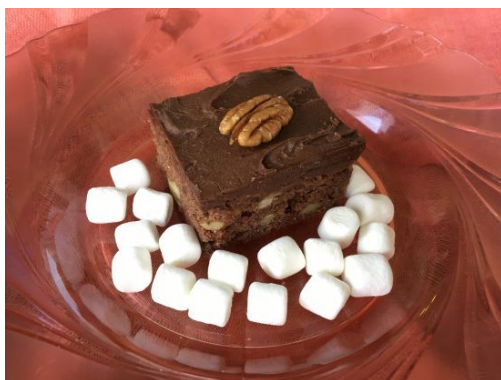


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Rocky Road Cake, a dense and delicious dessert

By Susie Iventosch



Rocky Road Cake Photo Susie Iventosch

If you love s'mores or rocky road ice cream, you will love this dessert! Even though it's called "cake" it is really more dense like a brownie. The cake batter, made with miniature marshmallows and pecans, has all the wonderful flavors found in the ice cream. In fact, the addition of textures to ice cream appears to have originated with rocky road ice cream and today you can find dozens of different ice creams with candies and nuts folded in.

The history of rocky road ice cream is an interesting, albeit conflicted one. According to several different sources, the first rocky road ice cream was born in 1929 during the Great Recession, when, in an effort to cheer people up, William Dreyer of Dreyer's Ice Cream partnered with candy maker Joseph Edy to create this tasty concoction. That said, there are also claims that this idea originally came from Fenton's Creamery, where the founder's grandson, Melvin Fenton, is regarded as

the inventor. And, to complicate matters even further, it is said that candy maker George Farren, who worked at Fenton's at the time, was good friends with Dreyer and Edy, and he was the first to mix a marshmallow-walnut candy bar into chocolate ice cream. The origins of Rocky Road candy dates back to 1853 in Australia, where confectionery that had begun to spoil on the long (rocky road) journey from Europe was mixed with local nuts and chocolate as a way of saving the candy. I'll leave it to you to further investigate or simply enjoy the fabulous concoction! It will make a delicious dessert for your Valentine.

This dessert is like eating cake and candy, all at the same time. High quality cocoa and chocolate make this cake even better. In purchasing cocoa powder, you may have noticed that cocoa powders can be "Dutch" processed or "Non-Dutched" - a fancy way to say alkalized or natural. It was a Dutch man, Coenraad Johannes van Houten, who invented the alkalizing process. While the Dutch process deepens the chocolate color, mellows the flavor, and reduces the bitterness, a natural cocoa has a sharper, more acidic fruit flavor. Because "Dutch" cocoa powder is more soluble in water, it is good for most baking purposes, but it may be fun for you to experiment with both to see which you like better. I really prefer the taste and the aroma of Dutch cocoa powder, but this is a personal choice. Also, because Dutch cocoa powder is non-acidic, it doesn't mix with alkaline leavening agents like baking soda. Instead, it is usually partnered with baking powder, which has a neutral pH level.

Origins of Rocky Road Ice Cream:

<https://www.braums.com/blog/everything-you-want-to-know-about-rocky-road/>

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/82388/conflicting-stories-behind-invention-rocky-road-ice-cream>

Dutch Process vs. Non-Dutch cocoa powders:

<https://www.seriousseats.com/2014/08/difference-dutch-process-natural-cocoa-powder-substitute.html>

Rocky Road Cake

INGREDIENTS

Cake

1 1/2 sticks (6 oz.) butter, at room temperature

1 1/2 cups granulated sugar

4 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

3 eggs

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

2 1/4 teaspoons baking powder

3/4 teaspoon salt

1 1/2 cups pecans, chopped

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 1/2 cups miniature marshmallows

Frosting

1/2 stick (2 oz.) butter, at room temperature

2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled (I use Trader Joe's Dark Chocolate)

1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder (I prefer Dutch processed cocoa powder-see article above)

3-4 cups powdered sugar

1/4 cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

Frosting Directions:

In a large mixing bowl, beat butter and melted chocolate until smooth. Add cocoa powder and mix until well-integrated. Add powdered sugar, a bit at time, alternately with milk, beating after each addition until smooth. Stir in vanilla.

CAKE DIRECTIONS

With an electric mixer, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in cocoa powder. Add eggs,

one at a time, beating well after each. Add flour, baking powder and salt and mix well. Stir in marshmallows, nuts and vanilla. Pour into a greased (or sprayed) 9x13x2 inch glass baking dish. Bake at 325 F for 30-35 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean from center of cake. Remove from oven and cool completely. Once cooled, spread frosting evenly on top of cake.



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