

BLACKOUT CAKE, CONT'D

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- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2¾ cups sugar
- 2¼ tsp baking soda
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 large eggs,
at room temperature

DARK CHOCOLATE PUDDING
BUTTERCREAM

- 2 sticks (8 oz) unsalted butter,
cut into small pieces, at room
temperature
- 7 cups (almost 2 lb) confectioners’
sugar, plus more for thickening
- ½ cup black cocoa powder or
dark Dutch-process cocoa
powder
- ¾ cup salted dark chocolate
pudding (from recipe on
previous page)
- a few Tbsp heavy cream
as needed

mixture into the egg mixture, and then, using a rubber spatula, stir in the flour mixture, until incorporated and the batter is smooth, scraping the bottom of the bowl to incorporate any dry bits. Divide the batter equally between pans and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 35 to 40 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool completely.

Make the frosting and assemble the cake:
Once you have cooled pudding, begin the frosting base. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, combine the butter, 3 cups confectioners’ sugar, cocoa powder, pudding (¾ cup), and ¼ tsp salt. Mix on low until just incorporated. Next beat on medium-high until the mixture is creamy and ingredients are incorporated, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Add more sugar, 1 cup at a time, and mix on low until the frosting is thick but spreadable. Beat for 1 minute after each addition. (You may not need to add all the remaining sugar.) Raise the speed to medium-high and beat for 3 to 4 minutes, or until very light and fluffy. If the buttercream appears too thick, add some cream, 1 Tbsp at a time. If it appears too thin, add more confectioners’ sugar, 1 heaping Tbsp at a time.

Once the cake layers have cooled, frost the cake with the dark chocolate pudding buttercream.

Adapted from *Ovenly* by Agatha Kulaga & Erin Patinkin (Harlequin Nonfiction).
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SOUL FOOD

The first black-and-white photograph, a *real eye-catcher*, was produced by French inventor Nicéphore Niépce in 1826. When my husband clued me in to his color blindness a long time ago, it took all my moxie not to think of his world as a black and white picture show, an old film reel posing as modern day (barring a much longer runtime and sound aplenty). *Over there, next to the house with the blue door.* I would say things like this a lot, unconsciously referencing color, not once correcting myself, then awwing with pity when he’d dispassionately counter, *That doesn’t help me.* I constantly prod if being color deficient leaves him sad, but the answer is always the same. (*For the last time, no.*) American photographer Andri Cauldwell once said, “To see in color is a delight for the eye but to see in black and white is a delight for the soul.” I think of this quote often when I know he cannot see how *red* the sweet early strawberries I’ve brought home from the market are, or how *golden* the beets are glittering amid a tangle of crisp watercress, because it is all I can do to keep from being sad myself. If he is delighting deep down, then that is all that matters. SYLVIE MORGAN BROWN

