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## black russian cake

*a serious chocolate cake*

### for the cake:

- Butter for greasing*
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 4 large eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup strong coffee
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup crème de cacao
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Kahlúa
- 1 package dark-chocolate cake mix
- 1 ( $\frac{3}{2}$ -ounce) package instant chocolate pudding

### for the topping:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 3 tablespoons strong coffee
- 3 tablespoons Kahlúa
- 3 tablespoons crème de cacao

A few years back, my roommate had a crush on one of her classmates. As they worked long, hard hours on a project together, she wooed him to the best of her ability, but he did not seem to be taking the bait. As is typical of many men, he knew that he liked her . . . but did she like him?

Then she made him this cake. (Well, actually, *I* made the cake because she had to work the late shift.) Anyway, it's now four years later, and they have just purchased their first dog together. It's a pug named Kato, and if he were allowed to eat chocolate, he'd like the cake too. [*Update: Said couple has now gotten married, courtesy of my father, the retired Baptist minister. The wedding was an intimate, beautiful affair, and the bride giggled her way down the aisle, as she is wont to do. They have added an additional pug to the fray named Ling Ling. I suspect Ling will be a might jealous when their new baby arrives. He (it's a boy!) is due just in time for the release of this book on Valentine's Day 2007.*]

Y I E L D S 1 2 S E R V I N G S

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and thoroughly grease a 10-inch Bundt pan or a tin of miniature Bundts.

For the cake, combine the oil, eggs, coffee, crème de cacao, and Kahlúa in a large bowl. Mix well with a wooden spoon. Add the cake mix and pudding mix, and stir until just combined. Pour into the Bundt pan until three-fourths full. (Save any remaining batter for cupcakes or simply eat on the spot.) Bake 45 to 50 minutes, or until a skewer inserted comes out clean of batter. (For miniature Bundts, reduce the baking time to 20 to 30 minutes.) Invert the cake onto a serving plate and punch holes throughout the cake with a skewer or ice pick.

While the cake is baking, prepare the topping. Be sure to sift the confectioners' sugar well, or the glaze is sure to be lumpy. Combine the confectioners' sugar, coffee, Kahlúa, and crème de cacao until the sugar dissolves. Spoon over the warm cake, reserving several tablespoons to drizzle onto cut slices. Serve warm or at room temperature.