Hazelnut & Chocolate Meringue Cake

Makes: 8-10 servings

Active Time: 35 minutes Bake Time: 2 hours 30 mins

Total Time: 4 hours

- 1 & 1/2 cups hazelnuts (7 ounces)
- 6 large egg whites, at room temperature
- Pinch of salt
- 1 & 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp pure almond extract
- 1 cup mini chocolate chips (6 ounces)
- 6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled
- 3 cups heavy cream
- 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- Chocolate shavings, for garnish

Preheat the oven to 350°F and line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper. Draw two 8-inch rounds on one sheet of the parchment and one 8-inch round on the other.

Spread the hazelnuts on a third baking sheet and toast for 12 to 14 minutes, until browned. Let cool slightly, then transfer to a towel and rub to remove the skins. Chop the nuts. Lower the oven temperature to 225°F.

In the bowl of a standing electric mixer fitted with the whisk, beat the egg whites with the salt at medium-high speed until soft peaks form, about 2 minutes. Gradually beat in the granulated sugar at high speed until stiff. Beat in the vanilla and almond extracts. Fold in the hazelnuts and chocolate chips. Pour the melted chocolate down the side of the bowl and gently fold until the meringue is lightly marbled.

Spread the meringue in the drawn circles and bake for 2 hours and 30 minutes, until crisp; rotate the pans halfway through baking. Turn off the oven, leave the door ajar and let the meringues cool completely.

In the bowl of the standing mixer, beat the cream with the confectioners' sugar until firm. Remove the meringues from the parchment paper. Spread the whipped cream on the layers and stack them.

Refrigerate or freeze the cake overnight. Cut into wedges and serve at room temperature. Garnish with chocolate shavings before serving.

Recipe from Food & Wine