



Makes: 15 slices

Prep Time: 35 minutes Bake Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour & 20 minutes

## Ingredients

### Hot Cocoa:

- 1 & 1/4 cups whole milk
- 3 & 1/2 tbsp hot cocoa mix

### Hot Cocoa Cake:

- 2 cups (265g) all-purpose flour
- 1 & 1/2 cups white granulated sugar
- 2/3 cup unsweetened natural cocoa powder (not Dutch Process)
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1 & 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 cup hot cocoa from above, room temperature (see recipe below)
- 1 cup hot water

### Hot Cocoa Buttercream:

- 1 & 1/2 cups unsalted butter, room temperature
- 4 & 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 1/4 cup hot cocoa from above, room temperature (see recipe below)
- 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp salt

### Optional Fillings & Toppings:

- 1 jar Marshmallow Fluff for filling
- Mini and Large marshmallows for decoration



## Instructions

### Make the Hot Cocoa:

In a small saucepan over medium heat, warm the whole milk until it begins to simmer. Whisk in the hot cocoa mix and set aside. Wait until it's entirely room temperature before continuing on with this recipe.

### Make the Hot Cocoa Cake:

Preheat the oven to 350°F and prepare three 6-inch or two 8-inch cake pans by spraying the sides with cooking spray and fitting the bottoms with a wax paper or parchment cake circle.

Place all of the dry ingredients into the bowl of a stand mixer and stir on low for 30 seconds to fully combine them. Add the vegetable oil, eggs, vanilla, and hot cocoa and mix on low until just combined. Ensure that the hot water has been heated to a simmer, then with the mixer still on low, add the hot water in a slow stream. Turn the mixer to medium and beat until smooth, about 2 minutes. The batter will be very thin.

Pour into prepared cake pans no more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  full and bake for 40-45 minutes, until a wooden toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool completely before frosting.

### Make the Hot Cocoa Buttercream:

In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, whip butter on medium speed until creamy and light in color, about four minutes. Scrape down the bowl and paddle and turn the mixer to low, then add powdered sugar, cocoa powder, hot cocoa, salt, and vanilla extract. Increase the speed to medium and beat for two full minutes.

### Assembly:

Once the cake layers are completely cool, level them to the desired height. Pipe a ring of hot cocoa buttercream around the edge of the first cake layer, then fill the middle halfway with marshmallow fluff before filling the rest of the space with hot cocoa buttercream. Add the next layer of cake on top and repeat the filling process before adding the final cake layer on top, upside down so that the smooth bottom of the cake is facing up. Crumb coat with the hot cocoa buttercream and refrigerate for 20 minutes, then frost a final layer of hot cocoa buttercream.

Use a knife to slice mini marshmallows and place them onto the buttercream finish in an ombre layout. The inside of the marshmallow should be sticky enough to press onto the side of the cake and adhere, but if you need to, use a little water to make it stickier. Finish the design by piling marshmallows of various sizes on top and dusting with cocoa powder.

## Chef's Notes:

### Make Ahead Tips:

The Hot Cocoa Cake layers can be made ahead and stored, wrapped in plastic wrap, at room temperature for up to two days. Alternatively, you can store the wrapped cake layers in the freezer for up to 2 months before thawing and frosting.

The Hot Cocoa Buttercream can be made ahead and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. When you're ready to use it, bring it back to room temperature and re-whip in your stand mixer to bring back to smooth buttercream consistency.

To Make As Cupcakes: fill cupcake tins no more than  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the way full and bake at 350°F for 15-17 minutes, until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Yields about 35-40 cupcakes.

*Recipe from Sugar & Sparrow*