

CHOCOLATE WALNUT CAKE

I had the most delicious chocolate walnut cake in of all places, Penang Malaysia. I'm not a huge chocolate cake fan, but this one was fudgy, chocolatey and very moist. I've tried a million recipes to try to recreate it and finally found one that comes very close. I can't take any credit for it – it's by [Pastry Wishes](#) but hopefully they won't mind me sharing it. I rarely use other people's recipes, but this one is so good, I couldn't improve on it and it needs to be shared.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CAKE

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup + 1 teaspoon unsweetened cocoa powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup hot strong coffee

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 cup sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

1 medium egg, room temperature

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup light vegetable oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped walnuts + 1-2 tablespoons extra for garnish

FOR THE FROSTING

4.4 oz semisweet chocolate

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup unsalted butter, room temperature

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup + 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons powdered sugar

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon milk

PREPARATION

FOR THE CAKE

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Grease an 8-inch pan and line it with parchment paper.

In a small bowl, mix the cocoa powder and hot coffee together. Set it aside to cool.

In another medium bowl, mix together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Set it aside.

In a large bowl, whisk together the egg, milk, oil and the cocoa/coffee mixture. Make sure everything is well combined.

Add the dry ingredients and whisk until it's smooth.

Fold in the chopped walnuts, but don't overmix.

Pour the cake batter into the prepared pan and bake for about 30-40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Let the cake cool completely before topping it with the fudge frosting.

FOR THE FROSTING

Chop the dark chocolate and then melt it either over a double boiler or in 10-15 increments in the microwave. Set it aside to cool.

In another bowl, beat the butter together with the cocoa powder and sugar using a hand mixer until it's creamy, about 2-3 minutes.

Add the cooled, melted dark chocolate and beat again until it's smooth.

Add the milk and continue beating until it's creamy and your desired consistency. For thicker frosting, add more powdered sugar, for thinner frosting, add more milk, half a tablespoon at a time.

Then dollop the cooled cake with the frosting and make swirls using the back of a spoon or an offset spatula.

Sprinkle some more chopped walnuts all over the frosting.

G's POTATO CHIP FISH KEBABS

Here's an oldie, but a goodie—circa 1968. My childhood and dear friend Janis had the most beloved father on the block. He was a man way ahead of his time. I remember spending countless hours at their house as he introduced us to everything from Fred and Ginger dancing in *Top Hat* to Mahler's *Symphony No. 9*. His enthusiasm for the things he loved was infectious and it made us love them too.

He also knew his way around a kitchen in the days when it was strictly the woman's domain. He even won a cooking contest sponsored by the Potato Chip Institute International for this dish—not kidding!



But what's really a hoot is the article that was written about

him when he won. My, how times have changed. If you can enlarge the picture below, it's worth reading the article! (Thanks Janis for sending it to me!)



Men's cooking champion Gerald Fox works in the kitchen of his Bethpage home as daughters Rena Dianne, left, Janis Heidi, center, and Shari Anne look on.

Wizard in the Kitchen

Male Cook Is 'State Champ'

By TOBY CHUA

From a potpourri of seafood, vegetables, spices and potato chips, Gerald S. Fox of Bethpage, by profession an electrical engineer, has concocted a prize recipe which has brought him the titles of New York State Men's Cooking Champion and Wizard Cook . . . both ungrudgingly granted him by women.

The state title represents the triumph of his recipe Potato Crisp Fish Kebab, along with 49 others over 510,000 submitted nationally and scrutinized, tested and tasted by leading women food authorities in state run-offs in a competition sponsored by the Potato Chip Institute International.

The competition, which brought entries from 456,000 amateur male cooks, calls for recipes for a main dish using potato chips as an ingredient.

Mr. Fox's second title of "Wizard Cook" is an added honor from his wife Florence, a teacher, and

three daughters, who have granted him a permanent place in the kitchen of their Bethpage home.

THE STATE title gives Mr. Fox a gold trophy and a crack at the Eastern regional championship, after which he could go to Miami Beach to prepare his recipe personally before a panel of critical women judges selecting Men's National Cooking Champion. "Wizard Cook" represents victory in a decade-old battle with his wife for equal status in the kitchen.

In an interview, while Mr. Fox dabbled with another favorite original recipe, Mocha Souffle Graham Cracker Crust Pie, he explained, "My wife's been trying to drive me out of the kitchen for years. She thought her opportunity to defeat me had come when she noticed an advertisement for the competition in a newspaper.

"She challenged me," he continued, "to enter the contest and said I could

maintain a place in the kitchen if I won." Now that he has, Mrs. Fox, who thought him "impossible" in the kitchen, has smilingly said, "He'll be insufferable now."

THE WINNING recipe which Mr. Fox described as a "family favorite for years" and which samplers describe as "superb," grew out of his liking for a dish he tasted while on a business trip to Yorktown, Pa.

Other ventures into the kitchen involve preparation of lunches for his fussy brood of three when his wife is unable to, and concoction of sumptuous dinners as host for the local Gourmet Club of which he and his wife are members. Mr. Fox confessed that his culinary capers go back to his childhood when he worked alongside his mother of Hungarian descent, in the kitchen of their Brooklyn home.

A music lover and active member of the Syosset Concert Association and the Bruckner Society of Amer-

ica, Mr. Fox defined a good cook as one who "can establish a recipe and follow it, yet allow for creativity and know when to deviate from the specifics." He is a graduate of City College, with a master's degree from the Newark College of Engineering, and is associated with Grumman in Bethpage.

Mr. Fox has furnished his winning recipe with ingredients designed to serve six.

POTATO CRISP FISH KEBAB Marinade

- 10 ounces Italian dressing.
 - 1 clove garlic crushed
 - ¼ cup white cooking wine
 - ¼ cup lime juice
 - ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
 - ¼ teaspoon thyme
- #### Other Ingredients
- 12 jumbo shrimps-shelled,
 - 1 pound scallops
 - ¼ pound fillet of sole
 - 12 cherry tomatoes
 - 6 small white onions
 - 1 green pepper
 - bacon strips
 - 1 package potato chips—approximately 5 ounces.

Prepare marinade by combining all ingredients listed. Cut up fillets and green pepper into neat pieces for skewering. Par-boil peeled onions for 1¼ minutes. Drain. Add all fish and vegetables to marinade. Cover bowl and marinate two hours. Gently stir occasionally.

Crush potato chips . . . this can be done with a rolling pin while chips are still in bag. Coat each marinated shrimp, scallop and piece of fillet with crushed potato chips by pressing chips onto each piece of fish with the heel of a hand. Carefully lay coated fish on a plate.

Skewer fish and vegetables in a pleasing pattern, wrapping alternate fish pieces in bacon before serving. Broil to taste in electric broiler or outdoor barbecue, turning each skewer ¼ turn every few minutes until done (usually until bacon is properly done and potato chip edges are dark brown—approximately 15 minutes). Serve over bed of rice.

Mr. Fox recommends boiling the rice with two parts clam juice and one part water.

This recipe is being reprinted in honor of what would have been G's 97nd birthday. We miss you G!

INGREDIENTS

MARINADE

10 oz Italian dressing
1 clove garlic, crushed
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white cooking wine
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh lime juice
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh parsley
salt and pepper to taste

KEBABS

12 jumbo shrimps, deveined and shelled
1 pound scallops
 $\frac{3}{4}$ pound fillet of sole
12 cherry tomatoes
6 small white onions, peeled
1 green pepper
1 pound bacon strips
1 package potato chips (approx. 5 oz)
1 cup jasmine rice
1 cup clam juice
1 cup water
salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

Prepare marinade by combining all marinade ingredients listed. Cut up the fillets and green pepper into 2" pieces for skewering. Par-boil peeled onions for 90 seconds. Drain. Add all the fish and vegetables to the marinade. Cover bowl and marinate for two hours, gently stirring occasionally.

Cut a tiny whole in the potato chip bag to let out the air. Crush potato chips inside the bag with a rolling pin. Coat each marinated shrimp, scallop, and piece of fillet with crushed potato chips by pressing chips onto each piece of fish with the heel of your hand. Carefully lay coated fish on a plate.

Skewer fish and vegetables in a pleasing pattern, wrapping alternate fish pieces in bacon. Broil skewers on low, turning them a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn every few minutes until the bacon is cooked and the potato chip edges are dark brown—about 15 minutes.

Cook the rice as per box directions using equal parts of water and clam juice as the liquid. Serve the kebabs over a mound of rice.

CHOCOLATE ORANGE RASPBERRY CAKE

As many of you know, I'm not the baker in the family. My husband is the one that toils away with the flour and sugar...and chocolate, of course. This is his latest triumph. The cake is moist and the orange and raspberry give it a great zesty flavor. I'm not a huge chocolate cake fan, but this one has changed my mind. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

CHOCOLATE ORANGE CAKE

2/3 cup canola oil

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole milk

2/3 cup white sugar

2/3 cup caster sugar

1/3 cup powdered sugar

2 eggs

1 cup cocoa powder

1 2/3 cups all purpose flour

1 tablespoon baking powder

2 oranges, zested

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh orange juice

CHOCOLATE ORANGE CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

1/2 cup butter (4 ounces), softened

2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

28 ounces powdered sugar

1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa

Zest of one orange

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup raspberry jam

PREPARATION

CHOCOLATE ORANGE CAKE

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In a mixing bowl, combine the oil, milk, and sugars together.

In a separate bowl, sift cocoa powder, flour and baking powder, then add in the orange zest and whisk all together.

Slowly pour the wet ingredients into the dry, and stir until combined.

Add the orange juice into the cake batter.

Grease two 8" baking pans and line with parchment paper. Divide the mixture evenly between the two pans.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean. Allow the cakes to cool for at least ten minutes. Move to a wire rack and cool for an additional twenty minutes.

CHOCOLATE ORANGE CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Beat butter, cream cheese and vanilla with a stand or hand mixer until creamy, about two to three minutes.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the powdered sugar, cocoa, and orange zest. Slowly add to the cream cheese mixture. Beat on low speed until combined, then increase speed to medium and beat until fluffy—about two minutes.

FOR ASSEMBLY

Place a 9" cardboard cake round on a cake turntable. Place one of the cake layers on the board. Using a pastry bag with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " tip, pipe a boarder around the top of the cake layer. This serves as a barrier to keep the jam from spreading over the sides.

Spread the raspberry jam as evenly as possible on top of the cake layer within the piped border.

Place the second cake layer on top of the first.

Frost the cake with the remaining frosting. For decoration, use a jagged scraper along the sides and pipe small flowers on top.