

dobos torte

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Dobos Torte

Five thin sponge layers, chocolate buttercream between them, and a disc of hard caramel cut into wedges standing on top. József C. Dobos presented it at the 1885 National General Exhibition in Budapest; the innovation was the buttercream, at a time when Central European cakes were filled with whipped cream and could not travel. Dobos published the recipe in 1906 and released it to the trade.

The caramel top is not decoration either — it was a lid, keeping the cake from drying out.

What makes it work

- **Bake the layers separately and thin.** Draw 22 cm circles on parchment, spread about 90 g of batter into each, bake five to six minutes. Trying to slice one tall sponge into five gives uneven, crumbling layers.
- **French buttercream, made on egg yolks.** Yolks whipped with hot sugar syrup, then butter beaten in, then melted chocolate. It is richer and more stable than a whipped-cream filling and it is the point of the cake.
- **Score the caramel disc before it sets.** Pour caramel over one sponge layer, wait 30 seconds, and cut it into twelve wedges with a buttered knife. Set hard, it shatters.
- **Assemble on a flat board and chill between layers** if the buttercream softens.

Ingredients

One 22 cm torte, five layers. Serves 12.

Sponge:

- 6 [eggs](#), separated
- 150 g caster sugar
- 150 g all-purpose flour
- 3 g fine salt
- 1 tsp vanilla — see [Pure vanilla extract](#)

Chocolate buttercream:

- 6 egg yolks
- 200 g granulated sugar
- 80 ml water
- 400 g unsalted butter, softened
- 200 g dark chocolate, melted and cooled — see [Chocolates](#)
- 3 g fine salt

Caramel top:

- 150 g granulated sugar
- 2 tbsp water
- 15 g unsalted butter

Method

Heat the oven to **200 °C / 400 °F**. Draw six 22 cm circles on parchment sheets.

Whip the yolks with half the sugar until pale. Whip the whites to soft peaks, add the rest of the sugar, and whip firm. Fold the whites into the yolks in two additions, sifting in the flour and salt as you go.

Spread about 90 g of batter into each circle and bake **5–6 minutes**, until the edges are gold. Peel off the parchment while warm and stack with paper between.

For the buttercream, whip the yolks. Boil the sugar and water to 118 °C and pour it into the running yolks in a thin stream. Whip until the bowl is cool, about eight minutes. Beat in the butter a piece at a time, then the

melted chocolate and salt.

Make the caramel: melt the sugar with the water until deep amber, stir in the butter, and pour immediately over the best sponge layer set on parchment. Wait 30 seconds and cut into twelve wedges with a buttered knife.

Stack the remaining five layers with buttercream between, coat the sides, and arrange the caramel wedges on top, propped at an angle on rosettes of buttercream.

Notes

- **The caramel softens in the fridge.** Assemble the top on the day it is served, and keep the cake cool rather than cold.
- A modern shortcut bakes one 22 cm sponge and slices it into three; it is a good cake and it is not a Dobos.
- **Keeps three days** in a cool room. The buttercream is what makes that possible.

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