

wacky cake

<https://www.agoramores.com/food/recipes/cakes/wacky-cake>

Tags: food · recipes · cake-recipes

Related

cake-recipes

- [cakes](#)
- [victoria sponge](#)
- [chiffon cake](#)
- [dobos torte](#)
- [lamingtons](#)
- [genoise](#)

recipes

- [pies](#)
- [stroopwafels](#)
- [shoofly pie](#)
- [pate sucree](#)
- [anzac biscuits](#)
- [blueberry pie](#)

food

- [Central Ohio U Pick Farms](#)
- [Re hydrated textured soy protein](#)
- [Cream sauces, milk solids](#)
- [Sugar](#)
- [Lemon juice](#)
- [chess pie](#)

Wacky Cake

A chocolate cake with no eggs, no butter and no milk, mixed in the pan it bakes in. It is Depression-era American — also called crazy cake, war cake, or depression cake — and it exists because eggs, butter and milk were rationed or unaffordable while flour, sugar, cocoa, oil, vinegar and soda were not.

It is also, incidentally, vegan, which is why it has had a second life.

What makes it work

- **Vinegar and baking soda are the entire leavening.** Acetic acid meets sodium bicarbonate, carbon dioxide is released, and the batter must go into the oven immediately — the reaction is largely over within a few minutes.
- **Oil coats flour and shortens gluten** exactly as butter would, and with no egg to bind, the crumb is soft and slightly fragile.
- **Make the three wells.** The traditional method makes three depressions in the dry mix — oil in one, vinegar in another, vanilla in the third — then pours water over the whole thing and stirs. It is not superstition: it keeps the vinegar off the soda until the water arrives.
- **Do not overmix.** Thirty seconds. It is a batter with no structural insurance.
- **Serve from the pan.** With no egg it is too tender to turn out reliably.

Ingredients

One 20 cm square tin. Serves 9.

- 190 g all-purpose flour
- 200 g granulated sugar
- 40 g cocoa powder — see [Cocoa and cocoa mixes](#)
- 5 g baking soda
- 4 g fine salt
- 80 ml neutral oil
- 1 tbsp white vinegar
- 1 tsp vanilla — see [Pure vanilla extract](#)
- 240 ml cold water or cold [coffee](#)

Method

Heat the oven to **175 °C / 350 °F**.

Whisk the flour, sugar, cocoa, soda and salt directly in an ungreased 20 cm square tin.

Make three wells. Pour the oil into the largest, the vinegar into the second, and the vanilla into the third.

Pour the cold water over everything and stir with a fork until just smooth, about 30 seconds. Scrape the corners.

Bake immediately, **30–35 minutes**, until the centre springs back.

Cool in the tin. Dust with powdered sugar, or top with a simple glaze of 150 g powdered sugar, 20 g cocoa and 2 tbsp hot water.

Notes

- **It is a genuinely good cake**, not merely a resourceful one — moist, dark, and better on day two.
- Coffee in place of the water deepens it noticeably.
- **Keeps four days** covered, and it is the most reliable cake to bake with children because there is nothing to cream and nothing to separate.
- The related wartime cakes — boiled raisin cake, vinegar pie — are worth a look; see [fruitcake](#).

Elsewhere on the site

Method and theory: [Cake recipes](#) · [cakes](#) · [yeast and leavening](#)

Nearby: [texas sheet cake](#) · [chocolate bundt cake](#) · [olive oil cake](#)