

yule log

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Yule Log

Bûche de Noël: a chocolate [Swiss roll](#) filled with buttercream or ganache, coated, bark-textured with a fork, and decorated to look like a sawn log. The pastry version dates to nineteenth-century Paris and stands in for the actual log burned in the hearth over the twelve days of Christmas, a practice recorded across Europe well before that.

It is a roll cake plus a decorating problem, and the decorating is most of the work.

What makes it work

- **A chocolate roll sponge, rolled hot** — everything on [swiss roll](#) applies, and cocoa makes the sponge slightly more fragile, so the hot roll matters more.
- **Two fillings, two textures.** Ganache or buttercream inside, and a firmer buttercream outside that can hold a fork mark.
- **Cut one end at an angle and stick it on the side as a branch.** That single move is what makes the shape read as a log rather than a roll.
- **Chill hard before texturing.** Cold buttercream takes a clean bark line; warm buttercream smears.
- **The ends stay bare** so the spiral shows. That is the traditional presentation and it is also how the eater knows there is filling.

Ingredients

Serves 12.

Chocolate sponge:

- 5 [eggs](#), separated
- 150 g caster sugar
- 90 g all-purpose flour
- 40 g cocoa powder — see [Cocoa and cocoa mixes](#)
- 3 g fine salt
- 2 tbsp neutral oil

Filling — chestnut or chocolate cream:

- 300 ml double cream, whipped
- 200 g sweetened chestnut purée, or 200 g cooled ganache
- 2 tbsp rum

Coating — chocolate buttercream:

- 250 g unsalted butter, softened
- 400 g powdered sugar
- 60 g cocoa powder
- 100 g dark chocolate, melted — see [Chocolates](#)
- 3 tbsp [milk](#)

To decorate: powdered sugar for snow, meringue mushrooms, redcurrants

Method

Heat the oven to **200 °C / 400 °F** and line a 30 × 40 cm tray.

Whip the yolks with 100 g of the sugar until pale. Whip the whites to soft peaks with the remaining 50 g. Fold the whites into the yolks, sifting in the flour, cocoa and salt, then fold in the oil.

Spread and bake **9–10 minutes**. Turn out onto a cocoa-dusted cloth, peel, trim, and roll hot. Cool completely rolled.

Fold the whipped cream into the chestnut purée with the rum. Unroll the sponge, spread the filling, and re-roll. Chill one hour.

Beat the buttercream ingredients smooth. Cut a 5 cm piece off one end of the roll at a 45° angle and attach it to the side as a branch, using buttercream as glue.

Coat the whole log, leaving both cut ends bare. Drag a fork along the length to make bark, and around the branch stub in rings.

Chill two hours. Dust with powdered sugar just before serving.

Notes

- **Make it a day ahead.** It slices better cold and the flavours settle.
- Meringue mushrooms are piped from any leftover meringue and baked at 90 °C for 90 minutes — the traditional decoration and worth the trouble once.
- **Keeps three days refrigerated.** Take it out 30 minutes before serving or the buttercream is waxy.

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