

Listeners Michelle and Alan Abrams' Dark and Stormy Coffee Cake

Winner of the 2025 Michael Shelley Show Bake-off!

Modified version of Classic Coffee Cake recipe from BiggerBolderBaking.com

STREUSEL MIXTURE

- 2/3 cup (135 g) packed dark or light brown sugar
- 3/4 cup (95g) all-purpose flour
- 2½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 6 tablespoons (85g) cubed cold salted butter

NOTE: This makes enough streusel for the middle of the cake and the top. If you use the Cinnamon–Espresso Ribbon in the middle, as I did, you'll have leftover streusel. I'm sure you'll find a use for it! You can store the extra in the fridge for a few days.

CAKE

- 1½ cups (166g) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup (113g) butter, room temperature
- ¾ cup (150g) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ cup (120g) full-fat sour cream, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons (30ml) milk, room temperature

CINNAMON–ESPRESSO RIBBON

- 1/3 cup (66g) granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons (12g) unsweetened cocoa
- ¼ teaspoon instant espresso powder
- 2 tablespoons (28g) grated or finely chopped bittersweet chocolate

BROWN BUTTER RUM GLAZE

- 4 Tbsp (57g) salted butter
- 2 Tbsp dark rum
- 1 Tbsp heavy cream
- 1 tsp light corn syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste or extract
- Pinch fine sea salt (optional)
- 1¼–1½ cups (125–150g) sifted powdered sugar, or to desired consistency

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Butter a 9-inch springform pan and dust the sides with flour. Line the bottom with lightly buttered parchment paper.
2. **Make the streusel:** Mix brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon. Cut the cold butter into the mixture until crumbly. Refrigerate until needed.
3. **Make the cinnamon–espresso ribbon:** Combine all ingredients except the grated chocolate. Set aside at room temperature.
4. **Make the cake batter:** Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a bowl. In another bowl, cream butter and sugar until fluffy (about 3 min). Beat in eggs and vanilla. Add sour cream and beat until combined.
5. Add the flour mixture, mixing on low speed until just combined. Beat in milk until incorporated—do not overmix.
6. Spread half the batter in the prepared pan. The batter is thick, and using an offset spatula or the back of the spoon will make spreading it easier. Sprinkle the cinnamon-espresso mixture evenly over the batter. Sprinkle the grated bittersweet chocolate over the cinnamon-espresso mixture. Press down very lightly with the back of a spoon.
7. Spread the remaining batter on top of the ribbon mixture. It's easier if you dollop spoonfuls over the ribbon mixture and spread them carefully with an offset spatula or the back of a spoon. Top with half the streusel mixture. Press down on the streusel lightly.
8. Bake 35–40 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs.
9. Cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then remove the collar. Cool completely before glazing.
10. **Make the brown butter rum glaze:** (Browning the butter gives the glaze a rich, nutty flavor, but if you don't feel like doing it, simply melt the butter.) To brown the butter, melt it in a small, preferably light-colored, pan over medium heat. Stir the butter or swirl the pan until it foams, you see golden-brown bits form at the bottom, and you smell a nutty aroma (about 4–6 minutes). Immediately remove from the heat so it doesn't burn.
11. Off the heat, stir in rum, cream, and corn syrup. Let sit a few minutes, then add vanilla and salt.
12. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and whisk in the sifted powdered sugar. Add the sifted sugar very gradually—start with ½ a cup. You want the glaze to be smooth, glossy, and thick enough to pour off a spoon in a ribbon. If you need to adjust the consistency, thin it by adding a few drops of hot water (not cold water! It will make the glaze grainy), or thicken it by adding a more powdered sugar, a spoonful at a time.
13. Drizzle glaze over the cooled cake.