



Strawberry Hazelnut Celebration Cake

It's festive, full of hazelnut flavor, and easy-to-make

1 cup avocado oil
1 cup granulated sugar
4 eggs, room temperature
1 cup traditional Greek yogurt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup strawberry drinking powder
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
1-1/2 cups Nutella or other chocolate spread
1-3/4 cups chopped hazelnuts, toasted or as needed
Garnish: Fresh halved strawberries as desired

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line two 9-inch cake pans with parchment paper; set aside.

2. Using a mixer with paddle attachment, beat oil and sugar on medium-high speed for 3 minutes, until combined. Mix in eggs, one at a time, until well incorporated. Reduce mixer's speed to medium; then add yogurt and vanilla. Mix for 2 minutes.
3. In a separate large bowl, sift together flour, strawberry drinking powder, cinnamon, baking powder, and salt. Add the flour mixture to the batter and mix for 1 to 2 minutes, until combined.
4. Pour batter into the prepared pans, equally dividing the batter between the two round cake pans. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes or a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean. Set aside to cool about 10 minutes; carefully turn out onto cooling racks, removing the parchment paper. Cool cake completely before frosting.
5. To fill and frost: invert a cooled cake onto a serving plate. Spread about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of Nutella on top of the cake. Sprinkle $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of chopped hazelnuts over the Nutella. Lightly press nuts into the topping so the layers will remain together when served. Invert the remaining cake over the iced cake; spread with the remaining Nutella and sprinkle the top with 1 cup chopped hazelnuts. Garnish the top of the cake with some cut fresh strawberries as desired. Yield: one 9-inch double layer cake.

Cook's Note: I used plain Greek yogurt, Nesquik Strawberry Flavor Drinking powder, and less hazelnuts on the first layer so the cake will stay together when served. The fresh strawberries added a delicious flavor contrast to the chocolate hazelnut filling and topping.

Recipe Inspired by: Kim Kushner, *The Modern Table*, p. 174 – *Chocolate Hazelnut Celebration Cake*

About the Recipe: June is the perfect month to find fresh juicy strawberries, which add a “welcome to summer” touch to this hazelnut cake. It's easy to mix up, bake, fill, and sprinkle with crunchy nuts. If you love Nutella, this will be one of your favorite desserts. For an extra celebration touch, lightly garnish with a few colorful sprinkles. Enjoy!