

I KNEW I WAS BACK IN THE SWING WHEN . . .

I had the motivation and energy to get out and experience concerts and celebrations.

~Jeni Cosgrove

Celebration Chocolate Cake

We believe it's not a cookbook without a chocolate cake. And this one-bowl, dark chocolate little number is an especially perfect match for our devotion to pumpkin and cocoa. Adapted from a recipe by dessert chef Emily Luchetti, our version ditched some of the fat and sugar but kept the joyful flavor. Use a large bowl, so you can easily whisk the batter together. Let the chocolate glaze cool a bit, and it will thicken like ganache.

Serves 14 • Prep Time: 15 minutes • Cook Time: 35 minutes

CAKE

- 1 cup **buttermilk**
- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup unsweetened **applesauce**
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 large **eggs**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup unsweetened **cocoa** powder

FILLING

- 8 ounces Neufchâtel or low-fat cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1/3 cup canned **pumpkin** puree (not seasoned pie filling)
- 1/4 cup **honey, agave nectar, or sorghum**
- 1/2 teaspoon ground **cinnamon**
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated **nutmeg**

GLAZE

- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 3/4 cup semisweet **chocolate** chips

TOPPING

Seedless **red grapes**, whole **blackberries**, pistachios, and curls of fresh **orange peel**