Extra-Virgin Olive Oil Chocolate Pound Cake

Makes 1 loaf, 8-10 servings

Delicate extra-virgin olive oil is a good choice for baking, but with chocolate, I prefer a robust oil with bitterness and pungency, such as the Italian Blend extra-virgin olive oil from The Olive Press. It has green olive flavors — grass, artichokes, green tea and spice — as well as nutty and buttery notes from ripe olives. This cake is delicious on its own, but can be dressed up with a dollop of whipped cream or Seville orange marmalade. If you want to accentuate the olive oil and chocolate flavors, lightly toast a piece of cake, then drizzle it with the same oil used to make it.

Extra-virgin olive oil for the pan

- 1⅓ cups + 1 tablespoon unbleached all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ½ cup unsweetened non-alkalized cocoa powder
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1¼ cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ¾ cup + 2 tablespoons robust extra-virgin olive oil (see Note)

Instructions: Move the oven rack to the middle of the oven and preheat the to 350°. Oil an 8½- by 4½-inch loaf pan.

Sift the flour, baking soda, salt and cocoa powder together, then sift a second time. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the eggs on medium speed until they are homogenous. Add the sugar in a stream, increase the mixer speed to medium-high, and beat until the mixture increases in volume and becomes paler, about 2 minutes.

Reduce the speed to low. Add the vanilla extract. With the mixer running, add the dry ingredients in 3 additions, alternating with the olive oil in 2 additions, starting and ending with the dry ingredients and mixing just until incorporated. Stop and scrape the side of the bowl as needed.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake until a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean, about 45-55 minutes.

Cool the cake in the pan on a rack until it is cool enough to pick up the pan, about 15 minutes. Turn the cake out of the pan, then turn right side up and cool completely. The cake can be made a week or two ahead, wrapped well, and frozen. Bring to room temperature before serving.

Note: Robust extra-virgin olive oils include the Olive Press Italian Blend, Talcott Carneros Estate, Apollo Sierra and Owens Creek Quartetto Classico.

See the bottom of Page G6 for where to purchase.

Per serving: 376 calories, 5 g protein, 41 g carbohydrate, 22 g fat (4 g saturated), 85 mg cholesterol, 147 mg sodium, 2 g fiber.