

The Cake Wreck that [Almost] Never Was...Vegan Chocolate Cake with Caramel Drip and a Marital Disaster Cake Collar

Two prophetic sayings kept running through my mind today as I drove this cake to church.

#1: The first half of the trip: "The difference between an amateur cake decorator and a professional cake decorator is that the professional one knows how to cover up their mistakes."

#2: The second half of the trip from my husband: "The closest we ever come to divorce is when there is one of your cakes in the car." Truer words have never been spoken. So, sit back and enjoy this story.

Once upon a time there was a beleaguered stay-at-home Dad whose only respite at the end of a long day with the kids was a trip to the grocery store. Now, you might think that this is not much of a respite but this Dad actually enjoyed any and all kinds of shopping so as soon as the Mom was able to put 1-2/3 kids to bed he would go to the "flee market." He would have his list on a shared app that the Mom would often update at the last minute thereby adding to his neurotic state. But he was quite content to do the grocery shopping whereas the Mom hated it. However, since the Mom is the baker and frequently had some odd items on the list this led to many terse texts back and forth while Dad was at the store. Once the Mom would get 3/3 kids to bed she liked to relax and not respond to the banal text messages such as those asking which kind of salt she needed.

One day in particular she had asked for coconut milk to make

vegan ganache. Dad, of course, texted multiple pictures of coconut milk which she mostly ignored but in deference to him quickly sent a formatted "sure" response from her Apple watch.

Unfortunately, Dad brought home coconut milk beverage instead of canned coconut milk (pay attention, this is lesson #1 in what not to do when using coconut milk in baking). Since Mom usually does the baking when the house is quiet late at night she found herself with no other options but coconut milk beverage with which to make her vegan ganache. The Mom also prefers to do her baking at night to avoid the possibility of Dad circling her repeatedly and asking inane questions such as "where is the salt that I just bought?"

The reason coconut beverage does not work is because it does not have the same fat content of full-fat canned coconut milk and it is watered down. You need the fat content to create a proper emulsion with the chocolate. But the Mom plugged away.

Every time she would heat up the ganache it would harden again in under a minute making frosting her vegan cake a hair-pulling experience. Now, at the end she was thoroughly unsatisfied with the appearance of the cake. With a little vegan caramel and raspberries she was able to make the top look good but the sides were an embarrassment. Now she remembered a prophetic saying (see #1 above) and desperately tried to come up with a decoration for the sides. Piroulines would have been perfect had they been vegan. She went to bed thinking she would have to live with the mortification of presenting a less than presentable cake. But this Mom has serious obsessive-compulsive traits. She shot up at 6:45 AM on a Saturday (even though she could have slept in) and raced to the kitchen to make her first-ever cake collar to cover the sides. IT WAS MAGNIFICENT! It made her feel like she could do anything! No one would have to see the lumpy ganache or the gloppy caramel (again, made with the wrong coconut milk)!
Hooray! Hooray!

They take two cars to church that day because the Mom has to

go to work afterward. She doesn't even care she has to work on the weekend because her cake is a success. She is humming along with her son in the back to their favorite song. They stop at a light. Dad is right behind. She is checking her makeup and then...it all comes crashing down, literally. The Dad decides to honk at her because the light turns green and with a start she revs the gas pedal, the car jerks forward and her beautiful cake collar crashes down on one side. Now, go back and read prophetic saying #2 above because the things running through my head for the rest of the trip cannot be repeated here.

Because they were going to church and because the cake was not horrible when they got there the Mom decided to forgive the Dad (but only after they were half-way through the Liturgy) and I am certain that they will live happily ever after. THE END

I did promise myself that I would post the good, the bad, and the ugly so here it is. The good news is that it was delicious and one friend said that it looked like abstract art!





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