

# Helgasteine

Recipes courtesy of Blend Café & Bakery, presented by Bronwyn Schieber and Faith Kemmerer

## Helgasteine

*Yield: 24 servings*

### For the cake:

2 (7-oz./200-g) packages almond paste (*Almond paste can be found in the baking aisle at most grocery stores, or you can find recipes online if you prefer to make your own.*)

1 cup unsalted butter, softened

¼ cup honey

1 cup granulated sugar

6 eggs, at room temperature

1 tsp. ginger

1 tsp. cinnamon

½ tsp. nutmeg

Pinch of ground cloves

Pinch of white pepper

1 cup all-purpose flour

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. baking powder

1 Tbsp. black currant purée

1 Tbsp. Dutch-process cocoa powder

### For the simple syrup:

1 cup granulated sugar

1 cup water

### For the caramelized pears:

3 ripe but firm pears (*about 1 ½ pounds*), cut into ¼-inch slices

1 Tbsp. lemon juice

2 Tbsp. unsalted butter

3 Tbsp. granulated or light brown sugar

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. ground ginger

¼ tsp. ground cloves

Pinch of salt

### For the chocolate glaze:

8 oz. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped

⅓ cup heavy cream

2 Tbsp. unsalted butter

1 Tbsp. vanilla bean paste

### For the assembly:

1 pound caramelized pears

2 - 7-oz. (200-g) packages almond paste, rolled into a thin sheet about ⅛-inch (3 mm) thick

½ batch warm chocolate glaze

**Directions:**

**Make the caramelized pears:** Toss pears with lemon juice in a medium bowl. Melt butter in a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat. Stir in the pears. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and cook, stirring once halfway through for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile combine sugar, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and salt in a small bowl. After 10 minutes, stir the sugar mixture into the pears. Increase the heat to medium and cook, stirring often, until the pears are tender and glazed, 4-6 minutes, depending on the type and firmness of the pears. Let cool completely.

**Make the cake:** Preheat the oven to 325° F (165° C). Line a half sheet pan with parchment paper and spray with nonstick baking spray.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the almond paste, butter, honey, and granulated sugar and beat until smooth. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Add the ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and white pepper, and mix to incorporate.

In a bowl, whisk together the flour, salt and baking powder. Fold the flour mixture into the egg mixture until just incorporated.

Divide the batter evenly among three bowls. Leave the first bowl plain. Mix the black currant purée into the second bowl. Mix the cocoa powder into the third bowl.

Transfer the three batters onto the prepared pan in three sections, spreading them evenly so each batter takes up one-third of the pan. *(If you want it to be neater, you can pipe each batter from a pastry bag fitted with a large open tip.)* The batters will touch while baking, but we'll trim those edges. Your objective is to have three individual blocks of cake: plain, currant and cocoa.

Bake for 20 minutes or until the cake springs back when you touch it and begins to brown slightly. Allow to cool completely.

**Make the simple syrup:** In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine the granulated sugar with 1 cup of water. Cook, stirring until the sugar has dissolved completely. Set aside and allow to cool.

**Make the Chocolate Glaze:** Put the chocolate in a heat proof bowl. In a large saucepan, combine the cream, butter, and vanilla bean paste and simmer over low heat until the butter has completely melted. Pour the cream mixture over the chocolate, making sure the chocolate is completely covered. Allow to sit undisturbed for a few minutes, then whisk until the mixture has emulsified.



## To assemble:

Using a sharp knife, separate the plain, currant and cocoa cakes, trimming so the cakes have clean edges and are equal in size. Place the cocoa layer on a cake board or cutting board.

Using a pastry brush, gently brush a thin layer of simple syrup over the cocoa layer. Using a small offset spatula, cover the layer with one-third of the preserves. Top with the plain layer and press gently to adhere. Brush the plain layer with simple syrup, then spread another third of the preserves on top. Top with the currant layer and press gently to adhere. Brush with simple syrup and spread a very thin layer of the preserves (*only a few tablespoons; less than on the other layers*) over the surface to act as an adhesive.

Make sure the rolled-out almond paste is large enough to cover the top of the assembled layers. If it's too large, trim it. Place it carefully on top of the currant layer. Cover the almond paste with a thin layer of ganache about 1/8-inch thick.

Place in the freezer for about 30 minutes. Dip a sharp knife in a glass of very hot water and dry. Score the cake into 2-inch squares, frequently cleaning the knife in the hot water and making sure to dry it completely. Then dip the knife in the hot water again, dry it off, and cut the squares, dipping and drying the knife after every cut to keep the squares looking neat and clean.

*\*Recipe modified from Bake It Like You Mean It, by Gesine Bullock-Prado.*