

# Texas Sheet (or Sheath Cake)

Anne Byrn/Between the Layers

With the help of Sarah, I've uncovered the secrets to making really good Texas sheet cake! Sarah's family uses Hershey's regular baking cocoa. But you can use whatever cocoa you have on hand. This cake needs a bit of salt, so that is why lightly salted butter is called for in the recipe. If you are baking with unsalted butter, add 1/2 teaspoon salt to the cake, and 1/4 teaspoon salt to the icing. And be sure to toast the pecans first in a 350-degree oven for a few minutes before adding to the icing. Sarah said, "That is a must." Place the pecans in a small baking pan in the oven for 4 to 5 minutes while the oven preheats, watching to make sure they turn golden brown and do not burn. As this is a summertime cake, serve it up right from the pan. Store leftovers in the pan on the counter, covered with foil for up to five days. Or freeze them to enjoy later in the summer or fall.

Makes: 16 servings

Prep: 30 to 35 minutes

Bake: 20 to 25 minutes

Cake:

Butter and flour for prepping the pan

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 cups granulated sugar

1 cup (2 sticks) lightly salted butter

4 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa (see Cake Notes)

1 cup water

1/2 cup buttermilk

1 teaspoon baking soda

2 large eggs, slightly beaten

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Fudge Icing:

1/2 cup (1 stick) lightly salted butter (see Cake Notes)

4 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa

1/3 cup whole milk

3 3/4 cups powdered sugar, sifted

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3/4 to 1 cup chopped pecans, toasted (see Cake Notes)

1. For the cake, place a rack in the center of the oven, and preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease and flour a 13- by 9-inch metal baking pan. Shake out the excess flour, and set the pan aside.

2. Place the flour and sugar in a large mixing bowl, and stir to combine. Set aside.

3. Place the butter, cocoa, and water in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat, and stir until the butter melts and the mixture comes just to a boil, 3 to 4 minutes.

Remove from the heat and pour into the bowl with the flour and sugar. Stir to combine. Stir the baking soda into the buttermilk, and stir into the batter along with the eggs, cinnamon, and vanilla. Stir until smooth. Pour the batter into the prepared pan, and place the pan in the oven.

4. Bake the cake until the top springs back when lightly pressed, about 20 to 25 minutes. Remove the cake from the oven to cool on a wire rack.

5. About 5 minutes before the cake is done, start preparing the fudge icing. Place the butter, cocoa, and milk into a large saucepan over medium heat, stir to combine, and bring to a boil, about 2 to 3 minutes. Take the pan off the heat and stir in the powdered sugar until smooth. Fold in the vanilla and pecans until well combined. Pour the icing over the warm cake. Let the cake cool at least 1 hour before slicing.