

Boston Cream Pie

RECIPE SLEUTHING—digging through old cookbooks, manuscripts, and magazines, looking for the first time a recipe appeared in print—is, for me, the most satisfying form of kitchen archaeology. Usually, that is. Sometimes it just leads to frustration. Who, for instance, created the first mayonnaise, ice cream, custard, or puff pastry? All of these classics came about hundreds of years ago, but their creators are long since forgotten. As Karen Hess states, “The lag between practice and the printed word is one of the most frustrating aspects of work in the discipline of culinary history,”¹ and many years often elapse between a recipe’s devising and its description in print.

Even so, I never suspected the origins of Boston Cream Pie (recently named the official dessert of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts)² to be anything less than straightforward. Here was a specific recipe developed in a young country, a recipe so popular that in 1958 it even became a Betty Crocker boxed mix that was sold nationally into the 1990s. Surely I could uncover its secrets if only I looked hard enough.

Boston’s Parker House Hotel (today the Omni Parker House) claims to be the birthplace of Boston Cream Pie. The hotel opened in October 1856,³ and legend has it that the Boston Cream Pie was served there from the very beginning, though it went by the name of Chocolate Cream Pie or Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie. What made the dessert so special was its chocolate icing. When the Parker House opened, chocolate was mainly consumed at home as a beverage or in puddings. Although recipes for chocolate cake can be found in cookbooks prior to 1856, most are for cakes that are meant to be eaten while sipping hot chocolate—no chocolate is actually *in* the cake. It’s hard to believe now, but until around 1880, chocolate was almost never used in baking, except perhaps by professionals. So the Parker House cake might have become well-known for its rather innovative use of chocolate. Surprisingly, though, this famous dessert was not listed on any of the nineteenth-century menus I examined from the hotel restaurant.

In fact, the Boston Cream Pie is not a pie at all, but a two-layer golden cake filled with pastry cream. The terminology is confusing. The 1851 edition of Miss Eliza Leslie’s book *Directions for Cookery* includes a recipe for Boston

Cream Cakes.⁴ Like Boston Cream Pie, her cream cakes have a cream filling. But her filling is luscious, made with egg yolks, heavy cream, vanilla bean, and Ceylon cinnamon, instead of the typical pastry cream made with milk. And her recipe differs from other Boston Cream Cake recipes of the time in its formula for the batter, which seemed to promise a cake-like shell rather than a cream puff-like dough.

Suspecting that these cream cakes might be the prototype for the Boston Cream Pie, I headed for the kitchen, but alas! I had great difficulty making Miss Leslie’s cakes. After thirty trials, with diverse and unpredictable results, I concluded that her recipe was unworkable. The cakes were, in fact, more like popovers or cream puff shells than anything else. Such a recipe couldn’t possibly be the precursor of the Boston Cream Pie.⁵

Boston Cream Pie was apparently first mentioned in print in 1855. *A Dictionary of Americanisms on Historical Principles* cites “Boston cream cakes” from *The New York Herald* of December 24, 1855: “boston cream cake, *prob.* [my emphasis] Boston cream pie, a form of two-layer cake put together with whipped cream, cream filling, etc.”⁶ The dictionary’s use of the word “probably” has been the source of much confusion. In *The New York Herald* article, *Boston Cream Cakes* appear in a menu served to the New England Society at its semi-centennial anniversary celebration.⁷ The dessert is not described, but since Boston Cream Cakes are really cream puffs (as even Miss Leslie’s recipe revealed), and since Boston’s Parker House Hotel did not open until 1856 (a year after the New England Society celebration), the diners could not have eaten a real Boston Cream Pie.

This discovery helped me confine my search to what we call the Boston Cream Pie today, a two-layer cake filled with custard and glazed with chocolate. The first recipe I found actually to be called *Boston Cream Pie* appears in a little booklet from 1878, the *Granite Iron Ware Cookbook*.⁸ The custard is called the “cream part,” while the cake is called the “crust part.” Although the cake is a sponge cake, it includes baking powder: one teaspoon for 3 eggs and 1 ½ cups of sifted flour. The recipe says to bake the cake “in two pie tins.” After baking, the cakes are split and filled with the custard. There is no powdered sugar on top and no



Boston Cream Pie.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY CESARE © 2001

chocolate glaze. The facing page presents a recipe called simply *Cream Pie*, essentially a variation of the first. The cake batter is baked in four “common-sized pie tins” and when cool filled with the custard to make two cakes. Again, there is no decoration for the top.

The terminology in this graniteware booklet intrigued me. Why is the cake called a “crust”? Is it because of this usage that the cake became known as a pie? Or is it because the cake was baked in a pie tin? I soldiered on.

My next discovery was the Washington Pie, which appeared in many American cookbooks prior to 1856, and well into the twentieth century. (Desserts were frequently named for our national heroes, such as the Thomas Jefferson Cake and the Robert E. Lee Cake.) Washington Pie was usually a two-layer cake filled with jam; sometimes the top was dusted with powdered sugar. A recipe from 1859 advises:

Take a round shallow tin, straight at the sides, (it must not slant any,) if you want to make the *crust* [my emphasis] of sponge cake, bake them about half an inch thick and use two, putting the jelly or preserves between them. If you prefer pound cake bake it twice as thick and cut it round and put in whatever you like; strawberries are very nice for this purpose, but most people use jelly.⁹

In many recipes for Washington Pie, the cook is directed to bake the batter in Washington Pie plates. Was the pie so popular that the baking pan became eponymous, or did its name refer to the manufacturer? Maria Parloa’s 1887 book, *Miss Parloa’s Kitchen Companion*, contains several recipes for *Cream Pie*.¹⁰ One of them instructs: “Spread the mixture in six well-buttered Washington-pie tins,—these shallow plates are also called “jelly-cake tins.” Aha! Pie tin, cake tin—they were really the same thing. Jelly cakes were the precursor of layer cakes. Pound-cake or yellow-cake batter was baked in round, shallow, straight-sided tins, and the layers were stacked with jam or jelly. Because the cake known as Washington Pie was as common in the 1800s as layer cake is today, the word “pie” stuck, even though it’s a cake.

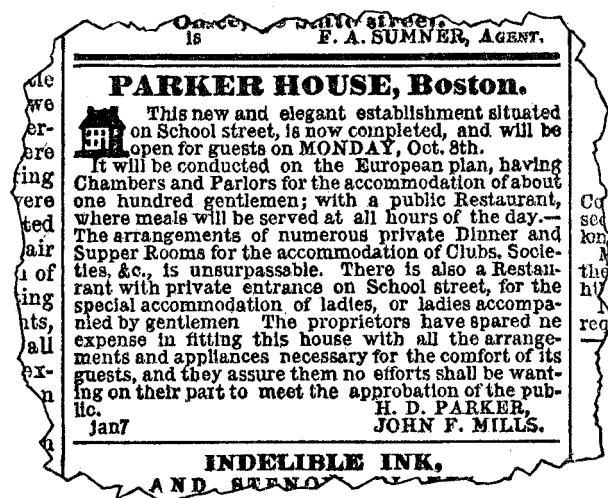
One of Miss Parloa’s most interesting recipes is for *Chocolate Cream Pie*, a yellow butter cake with baking powder baked in “four deep tin plates” to make two cream pies. A vanilla custard is spread between the layers, then some chocolate icing is spread over the custard. A second cake layer tops the custard; the remaining chocolate icing covers the top of the cake. Though this 1887 recipe is known as *Chocolate Cream Pie* (like the Parker House dessert), it is the closest yet to our present-day Boston Cream Pie. Interestingly, Miss Parloa does not attribute her recipe to the Parker House, nor does she even mention the hotel’s dessert. Yet in the same book she offers a recipe for Parker

House Rolls. Why does she attribute the rolls and not the cake? And how did her recipe for Chocolate Cream Pie compare with that of the Parker House?

Finding the original Parker House recipe proved more difficult than I expected. If the Parker House was so famous for this dessert, why wasn't it listed on any of its menus? I did find *Washington Pie* on a menu from January 4, 1858; and on September 28, 1865, *Cream Pie*, *Washington Pie*, and *Cream Cakes* were included among many other pastries.¹¹ Could Cream Pie be the hotel's famous Chocolate Cream Pie? It wasn't until 1957 that a menu listed *Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie*, with two stars indicating that it was "Famous at the Parker House for over 100 years."¹² Perhaps the dessert was so well-known that people simply knew to ask for it. Or maybe it wasn't offered every day. Parker House Rolls, the house specialty, were never listed on the restaurant menu; perhaps the same was true for the Boston Cream Pie?¹³

For such a seemingly classic American dessert, it's surprising that no cookbook recipe for chocolate-glazed Boston Cream Pie appears until 1950, in *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*.¹⁴ The evolution of this recipe tells an interesting tale. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Washington Pie recipes using custard between the layers instead of jam appeared with increasing frequency. Sometimes the recipe was called *Cream or Washington Pie* (1915)¹⁵ or *French Cream Cake* (1889).¹⁶ As late as 1931, Irma Rombauer, in her first privately printed edition of *Joy of Cooking*,¹⁷ included a recipe for *Washington or Cream Pie*—a butter cake split into two layers and filled with any of the following: jam, jelly, fruit, custard, or whipped cream. The top is dusted with powdered sugar. But she had no recipe for Boston Cream Pie. The 1934 edition of Fanny Farmer's cookbook does contain *Cream Pie (Boston Cream Pie)*,¹⁸ but it is without a chocolate glaze. Toward the end of the 1950s, both Fannie Farmer and Irma Rombauer, following Betty Crocker, included the chocolate glaze.

I decided to return to old cookbooks to look for chocolate-glazed cakes. *The Kansas Home Cook* (1879) has a recipe called simply *Chocolate Cake*, which yields a four-layer golden butter cake filled with vanilla custard and frosted on the top and sides with chocolate icing.¹⁹ Here, in essence, is a double Boston Cream Pie! The same book contains a recipe for *Washington Pie* filled with custard, not jam. The 1874 *Home Cook Book of Chicago* includes *Custard Cake*, a leavened sponge cake batter baked in several pie plates and stacked with custard between the layers.²⁰ The same book offers a recipe for *Boston Cream Cakes*. So within a couple of decades, these Eastern desserts



The Boston Herald announcement of the opening of the Parker House, 1856.

FROM JAMES W. SPRING, BOSTON AND THE PARKER HOUSE (BOSTON, 1927), P. 133

were not only being made by Midwestern home cooks, they had already been modified in their migration.

Despite all these promising leads, the original recipe for the Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie still eluded me. At this point Ruth Murray, from the Parker House Human Resources department, came to my rescue with *Omni Parker House Famous Recipes* and *A Pocket History of the Omni Parker House*. The recipe packet included *Boston Cream Pie*—not Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie—and claimed it was the original recipe. I believe it. Several things about this recipe stand out. The cake itself is a classic French *biscuit au beurre*, or butter sponge cake. Egg whites and yolks are beaten separately with sugar, folded together with flour (no chemical leavening!), and at the end, cool melted butter is gently incorporated. The cake is baked in a 10-inch pan. When cool, the top is trimmed and the cake split horizontally. The pastry cream is made with sugar, milk, light cream, and 6 eggs, thickened with a little cornstarch, and flavored with a splash of rum. Most of the filling is spread thickly between the two layers; the rest is spread on the sides of the cake so that toasted, sliced almonds will adhere. Toasted almonds? That was a surprise.

But what really sets this cake apart from all other versions is its icing, a chocolate fondant, which evidently lent its name to the Chocolate Cream Pie.²¹ Making fondant is generally too complicated for the home cook. A water- or milk-based sugar syrup is cooked to the soft-ball stage, then poured onto a marble slab and cooled until just warm. The mixture is worked with a firm metal pastry scraper until it turns white and hardens. After resting briefly, the fondant is cut into smaller pieces, each of which is kneaded until

creamy white and very smooth. Then the entire batch is kneaded together, wrapped airtight, and refrigerated for at least a day before using. Fondant is typically made by a confectioner, and the Parker House had one on staff.

To make chocolate fondant icing, the ripened fondant is melted over hot water, its consistency adjusted with water or milk to form a smooth cream. Melted chocolate is stirred in, and the icing is ready. Here's where the real skill lies. Because fondant icings firm up amazingly soon, the warm icing must be poured immediately onto the cake and spread thinly over the top. For the final decoration, some plain white fondant is piped through a paper bag in a spiral pattern over the chocolate. The tip of a paring knife or a toothpick is dragged through the fondant to make a spider-web pattern.²²

So I had finally traced the Boston Cream Pie back to its roots, and they turned out to be French! Everything about the Parker House dessert proclaims this ancestry: the butter sponge, the *crème patissière*, the almonds pressed onto the sides, and the chocolate fondant icing. Since the hotel's first chief cook, Chef Sanzian, was from France, this discovery is perhaps not surprising. And no doubt he was well paid for his creations. Within little more than a dozen years, the Parker House's chief cook was drawing a higher salary than Charles Elliot, the President of Harvard.²³

Ultimately, what the Parker House calls Boston Cream Pie and what the rest of America calls it are two different things. The Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie was gradually transformed into the Boston Cream Pie. The original Parker House recipe never appeared in any cookbook, because it would have been beyond the reach of most home cooks. But Americans have long sought to emulate chefs. We feel we have the right to create exceptional food in our own, often unexceptional kitchens. It is part of democracy. All we need are specific instructions and some basic equipment, and we can handle the rest.

What we had instead of Chocolate Cream Pie in our old American repertoire of desserts was the Washington Pie. What a simple matter it was to put custard between the layers instead of jam, dust the top with confectioners' sugar, and call it Boston Cream Pie. Later, when chocolate glazes began to be common among home cooks, American bakers could partially emulate the Parker House and make a version of the famous dessert in their own homes. Thus, what we call Boston Cream Pie today is an attempt to copy a glorious hotel dessert, an Americanization of a French cake, which evolved separately from the Washington Pie.

All we need remember is that even though our Boston Cream Pie is good, it's not the real thing—it's a bit like comparing chicken livers to *foie gras*. The original recipe is

a perfect marriage of the right kind of cake with the right icing. The toothsomeness of the butter sponge blends perfectly with the chewiness of the chocolate fondant. The pastry cream is less important to the success of the Boston Cream Pie than it is to Boston Cream Cakes, where the shells are just an excuse to highlight the pastry cream. Different types of pastry creams—with flour or cornstarch alone, or with a combination of the two thickeners—work fine in a Boston Cream Pie.

Sleuthing complete, I couldn't resist visiting the Omni Parker House in Boston. Executive Chef Gerard Tice and his pastry chef, Tuoi Tran, showed me how they put together a Boston Cream Pie for today's hotel guests. Since they make twenty-four Boston Cream Pies a day,²⁴ they have necessarily streamlined their methods, making a hi-tech cake with baking powder that is much like a genoise in texture. They brush each layer with a little syrup of sugar and dark Myers's rum (another French touch). Their pastry cream is thickened with both flour and cornstarch, and like the original, most of the cream ends up between the cake layers, though some is spread on the sides to make the toasted almonds adhere. Instead of the difficult-to-work-with fondant icing, they use a chocolate ganache. Ms. Tran deftly decorates the ganache with a spider-web pattern of white fondant.

Today's Parker House Boston Cream Pie is simply fabulous. Even though almost everything about it differs from the original, all of the elements blend beautifully. The tender cake and creamy ganache work as well together as the original butter sponge and chocolate fondant. Each cake is wonderful in its own right. Which do I prefer? The one I happen to be eating at the moment. 🍷

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NOTES

1. Karen Hess, *The Carolina Rice Kitchen: The African Connection* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 44.
2. Donna St. George, "Boston's Dowdy Pie Takes the Cake Again," *The New York Times*, 22 January 1997, Section C, p.1.
3. Some sources, including Edwin M. Bacon's *King's Dictionary of Boston* (Cambridge, Mass.: Moses King Publisher, 1883), say that the Parker House opened in 1855, but this is incorrect. James W. Spring's 1927 *Boston and the Parker House* (privately printed by the J. R. Whipple Corporation, Boston) reproduces an advertisement from the April 24, 1856, issue of *The Boston Herald* announcing the opening of the Parker House on Monday, October 8 (p.133). I found the same advertisement in the May 3, 14, 19, and 29 issues of *The Boston Herald*. October 8, 1856, was actually a Wednesday.
4. Eliza Leslie, *Miss Leslie's Directions for Cookery*. An unabridged reprint of the 1851 classic, with a new introduction by Janice Bluestein Longone (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), 458.
5. When I spoke with William Woys Weaver about this, he informed me that for years Miss Leslie lived in a hotel and most likely would not have had access to a kitchen to test her recipes. He also said that since this particular recipe appeared at the end of the book in an Appendix, it was most likely sent to Miss Leslie by a contributor. Miss Leslie had probably never even tested it at all!
6. *A Dictionary of Americanisms on Historical Principles*, ed. by Mitford M. Mathews, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 168.
7. "Forefathers' Day in New York," *The New York Herald*, 24 December 1855, p.1, col. 6.
8. *Granite Iron Ware Cook Book*, 1878, 50.
9. Phebe H. Mendall, *The New Bedford Practical Receipt Book* (New Bedford, Mass., 1859 [originally published 1857]).
10. Maria Parloa, *Miss Parloa's Kitchen Companion*, 20th ed. (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1887), 596.
11. Menus courtesy of the New York Public Library's menu collection. Box 1, 1851–1859.
12. *Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie* is listed on the Dinner at the Parker House menu from Wednesday, April 10, 1957. Luncheon menus of February 19 and March 1, 1957, do not list the Parker House Chocolate Cream Pie. (Menus courtesy of The Bostonian Society).
13. One time I did find a "Bread" category, on a menu from Tuesday, September 2, 1873. Among the nine breads listed were *Tea Rolls*, which may have been the Parker House Rolls. (Menu courtesy of The Bostonian Society).
14. *Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950), 242.
15. *Biscuit and Cakes. The "Reliable" Method* (Boston: The Reliable Flour Company, 1915), 45. (pamphlet)
16. *The Common Sense Cookbook*. Published by the Ladies of the First Baptist Church and Society (Coleraine, Mass.: J. L. Wade & Co., 1889), 45.
17. Irma S. Rombauer, *Joy of Cooking: A compilation of reliable recipes with a casual culinary chat* (St. Louis: A. C. Clayton Printing Co., 1931), 248.
18. Fannie Merritt Farmer, *The Boston Cooking School Cookbook* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1934).
19. *The Kansas Home Cook*, 4th ed. (Crew & Brothers, Publishers, 1879), 122, 156.
20. *The Home Cook Book of Chicago*. Compiled from recipes by ladies of Chicago (1879), 209.
21. *Confectioners' Journal* (Philadelphia, 1877), vol. 3, no. 29.
22. In the 1870s, desserts were commonly decorated by "piping a scroll." *Confectioners' Journal* (Philadelphia, 1878), vol. 3, no. 36.
23. "The Salary of President Elliott [sic] of Harvard College, is stated at \$3200, and that of the chief cook of the Parker House, Boston, at \$4000. Good cooks are, it would appear, scarcer in Massachusetts than college presidents." *Harper's Weekly*, 1 July 1871, 603.
24. The Parker House also makes individual-portion-sized Boston Cream Pies. They look just like the big desserts but are about four inches in diameter.

Parker House Boston Cream Pie

This is my version of what Boston's Parker House serves today. Although their cake formula uses a specially formulated commercial shortening, I use butter. Prepare the pastry cream first and let it chill overnight. Make the cake the day you plan to serve the dessert. Leftovers keep well for at least two days in the refrigerator. To assemble the cake like the professionals do, buy a 10-inch round cardboard circle from a bakery supply store. Or a supermarket bakery should be happy to sell you one.

Pastry Cream

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large or extra-large eggs
- Pinch of salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons cake flour
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups whole milk, very hot
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Beat the eggs with the salt until slightly thickened, about 2 minutes on high speed. Gradually beat in the sugar on medium speed. When all the sugar has been added, increase the speed to high, and beat until the mixture is thick and pale and forms a ribbon when the beater is raised. Add the cake flour and cornstarch and beat them in on low speed only until incorporated. Scrape the bowl. While beating on very low speed, gradually add the hot milk.

Transfer the mixture to a 4- to 5-quart saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring almost constantly with a heatproof rubber spatula. When the mixture becomes lumpy, switch to a sturdy wire whisk. Cook, whisking constantly, until the mixture is very thick and comes to the boil. Cook an additional 2 to 3 minutes, stirring all the while. Remove the pan from heat and whisk in the butter, then the vanilla. Scrape the pastry cream into a bowl and apply a piece of plastic wrap directly to its surface. Cool, then refrigerate overnight.

Rum Syrup

INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons dark rum

Combine the water and sugar in a small saucepan. Bring the mixture just to the boil and cook until the sugar is completely dissolved, stirring occasionally. Cool and stir in the rum. Refrigerate until needed.

The Cake

INGREDIENTS

2 cups (7 ounces) sifted cake flour
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
1 cup granulated sugar
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
3 large eggs
1 large egg yolk
⅔ cup whole milk

Adjust an oven rack to the center position and preheat the oven to 325° F. Butter a 10-inch round cake pan, line the bottom with a round of wax paper or cooking parchment, and butter the paper. Dust the bottom of the pan only with all-purpose flour, and knock out the excess. Set the pan aside.

Resift the flour with the baking powder and salt 3 times; set aside.

Beat the butter with an electric mixer until smooth and creamy. On medium speed, beat the sugar in 2 to 3 tablespoons at a time, beating for 20 to 30 seconds between additions. When all the sugar has been added, beat on medium-high speed for 4 to 5 minutes. Scrape the bowl and beat in the vanilla.

Add the eggs one at a time, beating on medium-high speed about 30 seconds after each. Add the yolk and beat 1 minute more. Stop to scrape the bowl and beater as necessary.

On lowest speed, alternately add the flour mixture in 3 additions and the milk in 2 additions, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients. Beat only until each addition is thoroughly incorporated. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan. Rotate the pan briskly on your counter top. The batter will level, and some of it will move up the side of the pan, leaving the center a bit lower. This is as it should be.

Bake 35 to 45 minutes, until the cake is pale golden brown and springs back when gently pressed in the center. A toothpick should come out clean. Cool the cake in its pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Unmold the cake onto a cooling rack. Remove the pan and paper, cover the cake with another cooling rack, and invert to cool right side up. Cool completely before using.

Chocolate Ganache

INGREDIENTS

½ cup whipping cream
7 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, chopped

Bring the whipping cream to a boil in a small, heavy saucepan. Remove the pan from the heat and immediately add the chocolate. Stir with a whisk until the chocolate is melted and the mixture is completely smooth. Use while warm.

Toasted Sliced Almonds

Place about 1 cup sliced almonds in a shallow baking pan and toast in a 350°F oven about 10 minutes, until golden brown. Check the almonds often and stir once or twice. Cool completely before using.

Instant “Fondant” Icing

Mix confectioners’ sugar with drops of milk until the mixture is thick, like heavy cream. You won’t need very much, about ¼ cup confectioners’ sugar plus ½ teaspoon or so of milk. Whisk until smooth and adjust the consistency with more sugar or milk as needed. Fold a square of wax paper in half to form two triangles. Use a sharp knife to cut the paper at the fold. Form a cone by folding the cut edge of paper around itself, and fold the “notch” of paper at the top of the cone down on itself a few times to prevent the cone from falling apart. Spoon the icing into the cone and fold the top of the cone down to cover the icing. Set aside.

Assembling the Boston Cream Pie

If your cake is slightly domed, level it with a serrated knife. Cut the cake layer in half horizontally. Place a dab of pastry cream in the center of the cardboard circle to hold the cake in place, and set the bottom half of the cake layer, cut side up, on the cardboard. Brush with half the rum syrup. Whisk the chilled pastry cream briefly to smooth it, and spread a thick layer on the cake. The pastry cream should be about ¼ inch thick. Save the leftover cream, which will be about 1 cup.

Set the remaining cake layer on top of the pastry cream and brush the remaining rum syrup all over it. Using a narrow metal spatula, spread a thin layer of pastry cream around the side of the cake. Save any remaining pastry cream for another use. Supporting the cake with the palm of one hand, press the almonds all around the side.

Set the cake on a dessert platter. Whisk the warm chocolate ganache to make sure it is perfectly smooth and pour it onto the center of the cake. Spread it evenly with a narrow metal spatula right to the edge of the cake, without letting any of it run down the side. Snip off the end of the cone of icing to make a small hole. Quickly decorate the top of the cake with a spiral of white icing, beginning at the center and moving to the edge. Drag the tip of a toothpick from the center outward, making 16 to 20 lines. Refrigerate at least 1 to 2 hours.

To cut the cake, rinse a sharp knife in hot water, and shake off the excess water before making each cut. Let the cut portions stand 10 to 15 minutes at room temperature before serving.

Serves 12 to 16.