6-layer Chocolate Cake with Chocolate Frosting & ganache

Yields: one 6-inch cake
Recipe: Kelsey Siemens - www.the-farmersdaughter.com

Cake ingredients:
1 ⅔ cup (332 g) granulated sugar
2 cups (250 g) all purpose flour
¾ cup (62 g) cocoa powder
2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1 tablespoon espresso powder
1 cup (240 ml) strong coffee
½ cup (120 ml) canola oil
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 cup buttermilk

Frosting ingredients:
1 cup (227 g) salted butter, room temperature
2 cups (250 g) icing sugar
1 cup (170 g) semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted
1 tablespoon vanilla
2-3 tablespoons cream (or milk)

Ganache ingredients:
½ cup (85 g) semi-sweet chocolate chips
¼ cup (60 ml) whipping cream

Topping:
Flakey salt
Coarse sugar/sprinkles
Flowers (optional)

To make the cake:
1) Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Grease three 6-inch pans with cooking spray, and set aside.
2) In a large bowl, whisk together the granulated sugar, flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.
3) In a medium bowl, mix the espresso powder, coffee, oil, eggs, vanilla, and buttermilk together until combined.

4) Pour the wet ingredients into the dry, and mix on low speed until just barely combined. Use a spatula to scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl to ensure the entire batter is mixed.
5) Distribute the batter evenly between the three prepared pans.
6) Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until an inserted toothpick comes out cleanly. Cool for 5-10 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack to cool completely. Store cakes in an airtight container in the fridge or freezer until ready to use to keep them fresh.

To make the frosting:
1) In a medium bowl, mix together butter and icing sugar until smooth and fluffy. Mix in melted chocolate, vanilla, and 2 tablespoons of cream, and beat on medium speed until nice and smooth. You want the frosting to be smooth and easily spreadable. Add additional cream if needed.

Make this frosting directly before assembling the cake - or it may firm up and be hard to spread.

To make the ganache:
1) In a small bowl, microwave the chocolate and cream together in 10 second increments, stirring each time. Once the chocolate has melted, the mixture should become smooth and shiny. Use immediately.

To assemble the cake:
1) First, prepare the cake layers by carefully leveling the tops so that the layers are as even as possible. Next, carefully slice each layer in half horizontally to create 6 total layers (skip this step if desired for a 3 layer cake).
2) Next, prepare the frosting. Place a small dollop of frosting on the cake plate, and then place the first layer upside down on top of it. The icing helps keep the cake in place on the cake plate, and placing it upside down helps reduce the amount of crumbs in your frosting.
3) Add about ¼ cup of frosting on top of the cake layer and spread evenly. Repeat with remaining layers, doing your best to keep the cake as straight as possible.
4) Use remaining frosting to coat the top and sides of the cake. Transfer the cake to the fridge or freezer to help the frosting set a little faster if needed.
5) Next, prepare the ganache (see above), and pour over the top of the cake. Spread the ganache over the sides so that it drips down the cake slightly. Add a sprinkle of flakey salt and/or coarse sugar. Add flowers if desired (lay down plastic wrap underneath and wrap stems with floral tape).
6) Serve immediately. Store cake in an airtight container at room temperature for 2 days, or in the freezer for a couple months (be sure to slice first before transferring to the freezer).