Fast & Fancy Chocolate Cake

Use a favorite package cake mix to save time. The raspberry filling and velvety ganache make it fit for a special occasion.

Chocolate cake mix, to make a two layer cake
½ pint fresh raspberries
4-oz. bar of bittersweet or semi-sweet chocolate
½ c. heavy whipping cream
¼ c. or more lightly toasted sliced almonds
Follow directions to make the batter for the cake and divide between two greased and floured 8- or 9-inch round cake tins. Bake according to directions and set aside to cool completely.

Raspberry Filling
Half a pint (a little more than one cup) fresh raspberries
3 T. sugar
1 tsp. lemon juice
2 T water
1 and ½ T. cornstarch
Sort and rinse raspberries and drain thoroughly. Place the raspberries, sugar and lemon juice in a small saucepan. Stir over medium heat, pressing down on the berries to break them up. In a small bowl whisk the water and cornstarch together and add to the berries. Cook until the sauce begins to thicken. Cool completely. If it is too runny, add a bit more cornstarch.

For the almonds, toast for a few minutes in a 250 degree oven in a single layer, stirring a couple of times, until the almonds begin to take on a golden color. Cool before using.

Ganache
Break or cut the chocolate into small pieces and place in a small bowl.

Heat the cream in a small saucepan over low heat. When the sides start to bubble and the cream is hot but not boiling, pour it over the chocolate pieces. Wait a couple of minutes before stirring. If it is too thick to spread readily, add a little milk or cream. Let cool.

Assemble the cake by spreading the raspberry filling over one layer.

*From Anne Gillespie-Lewis*