chattavore

CARAMEL CAKE (ADAPTED SLIGHTLY FROM AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN)

prep time: 30 minutes (plus inactive prep time to cool cake)
cook time: 45 minutes

makes one 9x13 sheet cake

For cake:
- 1/2 cup buttermilk at room temperature
- 4 large eggs at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 sticks (8 ounces or 16 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cut into 16 pieces and softened (plus more for greasing the pan)

For icing:
- 12 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 12 pieces and softened
- 2 cups packed dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9x13-inch cake pan with butter. Set aside.
2. Make the cake: Combine the buttermilk, eggs, and vanilla in a large measuring cup. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the dry ingredients. Using an electric hand mixer or stand mixer set on low speed, begin beating the dry ingredients and add the butter, one piece at a time, until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Increase the mixer speed to medium high and add the liquid ingredients. Mix until incorporated. Spread into the prepared pan and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Cool completely in the pan.
3. Make the icing: Once the cake has cooled, place 8 tablespoons of the remaining butter into a medium saucepan with the brown sugar, and salt. Set over medium heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until bubbles form around the edges of the pan. Add the cream and stir to fully combine. Cook until bubbles form around the edge again.
4. Transfer the caramel to a mixing bowl. Using a hand or stand mixer on low speed, beat the powdered sugar, 1/2 cup at a time, into the caramel mixture. Increase speed to medium and beat until fluffy and light in color, about five minutes. Add the remaining 4 tablespoons of butter, one piece at a time, and beat until well combined.
5. Pour the frosting onto the cooled cake and spread to edges. Allow to set until the icing has cooled, then serve.