

## ***Bûche de Noël***

*This is a glorious, French sponge cake, assembled like the traditional yule-log. It has a chestnut filling and is covered with rich, dark chocolate. Traditionally, Nicole makes this special treat in our home nearly every Christmas.*

*You can buy cooked and peeled chestnuts, (my choice) or spend an extra hour cooking and peeling them yourself. Already assembled, this cake freezes very well and can be made several days to a week in advance.*

*For this recipe, I have chosen gluten-free flour, and you have the option to make it sugar-free and dairy free if you choose. If you use Xylitol or Erythritol, please be aware that excessive portions can have a laxative effect—don't have more than one serving when using these sugar substitutes.*

**Preparation Time:** 1 hour with cooked and peeled chestnuts

**Baking Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** 8-12

### **Filling:**

10 ounces      Chestnuts, cooked and peeled  
2 Tbsp          Organic half & half (or almond milk)  
3 Tbsp          Sugar (or either Xylitol or Erythritol)  
3 Tbsp          Dark rum (or for alcohol-free, use additional half & half or almond milk as above)  
½ tsp          Vanilla extract

### **Cake:**

½ cup          Sugar (or either Xylitol or Erythritol)  
½ cup          Almond meal (almond flour)  
½ cup          Gluten-free all-purpose flour  
½ tsp          Sea salt  
1 tsp          Baking powder  
1 tsp          Baking soda  
¼ cup          Cocoa powder  
1 cup          Organic low-fat milk (or almond milk)  
¼ cup          Ghee (clarified butter, or almond oil)  
2 tsp          Vanilla extract

### **Icing:**

4 ounces      Semi-sweet chocolate  
2 Tbsp      Hot coffee (regular or decaf)

### **Optional Topping:**

1 cup          Organic cream (for whipping, or dairy-free coconut cream)

**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Purée the filling ingredients and set aside.

Cover a large cookie sheet with parchment or wax paper, then brush lightly with almond oil.

Combine dry cake ingredients and sift through a fine mesh strainer. In a separate bowl, whisk together liquid cake ingredients; if you use ghee and it clumps when cold, warm combined fluids until ghee liquefies. Then whisk and gently pour liquid ingredients into dry ingredients and stir until well mixed.

Pour the batter onto the prepared cookie sheet and spread it evenly so that you have a 14 x 9-inch rectangle. Bake for 10-15 minutes, until cooked. Allow the cake to cool for 5 minutes, then gently roll it up lengthwise (like a jelly-roll) with the parchment paper still attached to it. Wait 1 minute, then gently unroll the cake and spread the filling evenly over the cake surface (don't worry if the cake cracks; it won't show in the end.) Roll the cake up again gently, while removing the parchment. Allow the roll to cool.

With a bread knife, slice a 3-inch piece off each end at a 45-degree angle. Gently transfer the large piece onto a serving platter. Place the small pieces to either side of the roll with the slanted end showing outward. The cake should now look like a log with 2 cut-off branches.

In a double boiler, melt chocolate (If you don't have a double boiler, use a saucepan on low heat.) Once melted, slowly stir in hot coffee. If it clumps, remove from heat and stir until it turns smooth to form icing.

Before it cools, gently, spread icing over the cake surface, leaving the branches and log ends visible. As the icing cools, draw vertical lines along the log and limbs, making the icing look like bark. Optionally serve with whipped topping.

Enjoy!

Steven Masley, MD