CHOCOLATE HAZELNUT CAKE

SERVES 12 TO 16

This cake is pure decadence. It's a chocolate lover's dream cake. The classic flavor profile of hazelnut and chocolate makes the cake as delicious as it is as elegant. **SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:** 9-inch round cardboard cake circle, pastry brush, pastry bag, #8 star tip, small offset spatula

1 cup skin-on hazelnuts

$1/4$ cup granulated sugar

$1/4$ cup water

1 tablespoon Frangelico or other hazelnut liqueur

Basic Chocolate Cake, baked and cooled

2 recipes Ganache Filling; see Note

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Spread out the hazelnuts in an even layer on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until toasted, 5 to 10 minutes. Transfer the nuts to a plate to cool, so they don't continue cooking from carryover cooking. When they're cool enough to handle, roughly chop or crush the hazelnuts.

In a small saucepan, combine the sugar, water, and Frangelico. Bring to a boil to dissolve the sugar. Let the syrup cool to just warm or room temperature.

Place one cake layer on top of a 9-inch round cardboard cake circle. Using a pastry brush, brush the entire surface of the cake layer with the syrup until it feels moist to the touch, letting it soak in (you may not need all the syrup). Spread the cake with ganache about $1/2$ inch thick and top with the second cake layer. Spread the top and sides with a thin layer of the ganache until smooth. Fit a pastry bag with a #8 star tip, fill the bag with the

remaining ganache, and pipe rosettes (see "Decorating with Icing") around the entire cake. Top with the toasted hazelnuts.

NOTE: If you want to skip the rosette decoration, you'll only need 1 recipe of Ganache Filling.