

CHOCOLATE AND ALMOND CAKE

Ingredients

110g butter (or use coconut oil to make it dairy free)
110g dark chocolate (60-75%)
3 eggs
110g golden caster sugar
110g ground almonds
½ tsp baking powder
1 ½ tbsps sifted cocoa powder (plus extra for dusting the tin if you like)
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp fine sea salt

Method

Preheat the oven to 180C/160C fan and grease an 18cm round cake tin, preferably a loose-bottomed tin to help removing the cake from the tin when cooked. You can very lightly dust the surfaces of the tin with sifted cocoa powder if you like; this will help you remove the cake at the end.

Put the butter and broken-up chocolate in a bowl over a barely simmering pan of water – make sure the bottom of the bowl doesn't touch the water – and stir occasionally while the mixture melts (you could do this step in a microwave). Remove from the heat, give it a good stir and set aside somewhere warm for the moment.

Separate the eggs, putting them in separate bowls. Add 50g of the sugar to the egg whites and whisk together until very thick, then add the remainder and whisk again until you have a glossy, meringue-like consistency (this will take about 5 minutes).

Stir the egg yolks into the chocolate mixture, then add the ground almonds, baking powder, sifted cocoa, vanilla extract and sea salt. Fold this all together with a large metal spoon. Add in a large spoonful of the whisked egg to loosen the mixture, then fold in the rest of the egg whites and sugar mixture with a metal spoon using figure-of-eight motions, to give a grainy, mousse-like consistency. Don't over-mix, as you need to keep as much air from the egg whites in the mix as possible.

Transfer the mix carefully to the prepared tin and bake for 35-45 minutes on the middle shelf. It should feel firm to the touch, but a skewer inserted into the middle should still have some slightly uncooked mix on it. The chocolate will firm up as it cools, the surface will crack, and you will end up with a brownie-like consistency. Allow the cake to cool before removing from the tin. You can decorate with mini eggs or flowers for Easter. This will keep for around 3 days – but I bet it doesn't!!!

