

Chocolate and Pear cake (Gluten free)



Ingredients

100g butter
100g caster sugar
100g chopped dark chocolate
3 large eggs, separated
4 ripe pears
100g packet ground almonds
2 Tbsp apricot glaze
Icing sugar, for dusting

Method

1. To make this chocolate cake, set the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Butter the flan tin and put a disc of baking parchment in the base. Spoon in a little sugar and use it to coat the inside of the tin, then tip out the excess.
2. Melt the butter and chocolate together, in a bowl over a pan of hot water or in a microwave oven. Leave it to cool slightly, but don't allow it to reset.
3. Whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until the mixture is thick and creamy and a trail can be seen in the mixture when the whisk is lifted up.
4. To prepare the pears, peel them with a vegetable peeler and then halve them. Use a melon baller, or a teaspoon, to scoop out the centre.
5. Fold the melted chocolate mixture and ground almonds into the whisked egg-yolk mixture.
6. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites until they're stiff. Fold a couple of tablespoons of the egg whites into the chocolate mixture, to loosen it.
7. Pour the chocolate mixture into the bowl with the egg whites; pour it to one side of the egg whites rather than in the centre, to avoid knocking out too much of the air from the egg whites.
8. Fold both mixtures together, using a large metal spoon, or a spatula, taking care not to overwork it or the air will be lost and the sponge won't rise as much.
9. Pour the mixture into the tin; hold the bowl just above the tin while pouring — again, so that the air isn't lost from the mixture.
10. Arrange the pear halves on top, with the cut-side down. Bake cake in the centre of the oven for 45 mins to 1 hour, or until it's set in the centre and the mixture doesn't wobble. Leave the cake to cool in the tin for a few minutes before transferring it to a wire rack.
11. While the cake is still hot, warm the apricot glaze or jam and brush it over the top. Dredge the cake with icing sugar just before serving. It may be served warm or at room temperature.