

CHOCOLATE APPLE CAKE

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 50–55 minutes
Use: 21cm (8½ in) sandwich tin
Serves: 8

CAKE

140g (4¾ oz) hazelnuts
275g (10oz) unsalted butter
175g (6oz) caster sugar
3 large eggs
275g (10oz) self-raising flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
4 tablespoons strong coffee
50g (2oz) dark chocolate,
minimum 60% cocoa solids, coarsely grated

FILLING

700g (1½ lb) Bramley apples
1 large lemon
2 dessertspoons rhubarb jam or fruit compôte

ICING

200g (7oz) dark chocolate,
minimum 60% cocoa solids, broken into pieces
25g (1oz) unsalted butter
2 drops vanilla extract
1 teaspoon strong coffee

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Butter and flour the sandwich tin.

To make the cake, crush the hazelnuts, not too finely, and grill lightly until they are golden. They burn very easily so keep a close eye on them. Cream the butter and sugar together. Whisk the eggs and add to the creamed mixture with a little flour. Mix together well. Sift in the remainder of the flour and the baking powder and enough coffee to make a soft mix. Set aside 25g (1oz) of the grilled hazelnuts, then fold in the remainder into the mixture, along with the coarsely grated chocolate.

Pour the mixture into the sandwich tin. Bake for 50–55 minutes. Leave the cake to cool a little in the tin, before turning out to cool completely on a wire rack.

Meanwhile, prepare the filling. Peel and roughly chop the Bramley apples. Place in a saucepan with the grated rind and juice of the lemon and the jam. Cover and cook on a low heat, stirring occasionally, until the apple pieces are soft, but not mushy.

Once the cake has cooled, carefully cut it in half and fill with the cooled apple.

To make the icing, melt the chocolate with the coffee in a heatproof bowl suspended over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter and vanilla extract. Leave to cool a little before pouring over the cake, allowing the icing to run gently over the sides.

Decorate with the reserved hazelnuts.

HINT: This cake can be made with almost any nuts, especially pine nuts or almonds, which do not have to be grilled.



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