



CHEQUERBOARD

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Use: 3 x 20 x 20cm (8 x 8in) cake tins, 2 x pastry bags with 2.25cm (7/8 in) plain or fluted nozzles.

Serves: 8-10

VANILLA BATTER

225g (8oz) unsalted butter

225g (8oz) caster sugar

4 large eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

250g (9oz) plain flour

10g (1/2 oz) baking powder

CHOCOLATE BATTER

225g (8oz) unsalted butter

225g (8oz) caster sugar

4 large eggs

220g (7 1/2 oz) plain flour

50g (2oz) cocoa powder

10g (1/2 oz) baking powder

SUGAR SYRUP

250g (9oz) granulated sugar

300ml (1/2 pint) water

1 tablespoon rum

2 tablespoons apricot jam

GANACHE

150g (5oz) dark chocolate,
minimum 60% cocoa solids, broken into pieces

150ml (1/4 pint) whipping cream

Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5.

Butter the cake tins, line the bases with rounds of waxed paper, then butter the paper.

Begin by making the sugar syrup. Put the sugar and water in a saucepan and bring to the boil, without stirring, and boil until it begins to thicken. Remove from the heat and add the rum. Set aside.

To make the vanilla batter, cream together the butter and caster sugar thoroughly.

Add the eggs, one by one, mixing well between each addition, then add the vanilla extract.

Sift together the flour and baking powder and add to the mixture, stirring well. The mixture will be quite stiff. Set aside while you make the second batch.

To make the chocolate batter, cream together the butter and the caster sugar thoroughly. Add the eggs, one by one, mixing well between each addition.

Sift together the flour, cocoa and the baking powder and add to the mixture, stirring well. The mixture will be quite stiff.

Place the piping nozzles securely in the pastry bags. Put all the vanilla mixture into one of the bags and the chocolate mixture into the other. Place the three prepared baking tins in a row.

Starting with the vanilla batter, pipe a ring of vanilla batter inside the outer rim of one of the cake tins.

HINT: This cake becomes even more indulgent if you chop up a bar of our Almond Milk Chocolate into tiny pieces and sprinkle it over the top.

Then pipe a ring of chocolate batter inside the vanilla ring. Continue to pipe alternating rings of vanilla and chocolate batter. There should be 6 rings of alternating batter, the centre one being chocolate. Fill the second cake pan in the same way.

Fill the third cake tin, starting with a chocolate ring and ending with a vanilla ring.

Tap the base of each of the cake tins gently on a flat surface to release any air pockets before placing in the oven. Bake for about 20 minutes.

Remove the cakes from the oven, leave in their tins for 5 minutes to cool slightly. Turn them out on to a wire cooling rack and brush the sugar syrup over the bottom of each cake. Allow to cool.

Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl suspended over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Set aside.

Whip the cream until soft peaks form, then pour the hot chocolate over it in a steady stream, continuing to whip the cream, until the chocolate is just blended.

Once cool, place one of the cakes with a vanilla outer ring on a serving plate, spread apricot jam over the cake and then place the cake that has the chocolate outer ring on top of it. Spread apricot jam over it, then place the third cake on the top.

Using a palette knife, spread the ganache over the top and sides of the cake to cover it completely.



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