

This cake is light and moist and the flavour of the chocolate and the almonds together with the texture and taste of the figs combine to make it truly unforgettable. Rachael Vingoe sent us this recipe, inspired by a cake that she bakes each Christmas.

CHOCOLATE, FIG AND ALMOND CAKE

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Baking time: 50 minutes
Use: 23cm (9in) springform cake tin

- 150g (5oz) dried ready-to-eat figs
- 3 tablespoons Amaretto
- 250g (9oz) unsalted butter
- 250g (9oz) caster sugar
- 75g (3oz) ground almonds
- 100g (3½ oz) plain flour
- 4 large eggs
- 200g (7oz) dark chocolate, minimum 60% cocoa solids, chopped
- 3 heaped tablespoons cocoa powder
- 100g (3½ oz) whole peeled almonds

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Butter and line the cake tin with greaseproof paper.

Remove the hard stalks from the figs and chop the figs in a food-processor into very small pieces. Place in a small bowl and pour the Amaretto over them. Set aside.

Cream the butter and the sugar until light and fluffy. Mix the ground almonds with the flour in a separate bowl. Beat the eggs and add a little at a time to the creamed mixture, beating gently between each addition. (If you are using an electric mixer it should be on its slowest speed.) Then add the almonds and flour a third at a time, continuing to beat gently.

Carefully fold in the chopped chocolate, the figs and Amaretto to the mixture.

Spoon the mixture into the cake tin and smooth over the top using a palette knife. Dust the top evenly with 2 heaped tablespoons of the cocoa. Arrange the whole almonds on top and then bake the cake for 40–50 minutes or until it is firm to the touch and a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool and then use a fine sieve to sprinkle the remaining cocoa over the top before serving.



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