

CHOCOLATE OLIVE OIL CAKE

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INGREDIENTS - 8-12 slices

- 150 millilitres regular mild olive oil (plus more for greasing)
- 50 grams good-quality cocoa powder (sifted)
- 2 teaspoons best vanilla extract
- 150 grams ground almonds (or 125g plain flour / 3/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour)
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 pinch of salt
- 200 grams caster sugar
- 3 large eggs

METHOD

- 1.Preheat your oven to 170°C/150°C Fan/gas mark 3/325°F. Grease a 22 or 23 cm/ 9inch springform tin with a little oil and line the base with baking parchment.
- 2.Measure and sift the cocoa powder into a bowl or jug and whisk in 125ml/½ cup of boiling water until you have a smooth, chocolatey, still runny (but only just) paste. Whisk in the vanilla extract, then set aside to cool a little.
- 3.In another smallish bowl, combine the ground almonds (or flour) with the bicarbonate of soda and pinch of salt.
- 4.Put the sugar, olive oil and eggs into the bowl of a freestanding mixer with the paddle attachment (or other bowl and whisk arrangement of your choice) and beat together vigorously for about 3 minutes until you have a pale primrose, aerated and thickened cream.
- 5.Turn the speed down a little and pour in the cocoa mixture, beating as you go, and when all is scraped in you can slowly tip in the ground almond (or flour) mixture.
- 6.Scrape down, and stir a little with a spatula, then pour this dark, liquid batter into the prepared tin. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until the sides are set and the very centre, on top, still looks slightly damp. A cake tester should come up mainly clean but with a few sticky chocolate crumbs clinging to it.
- 7.Let it cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack, still in its tin, and then ease the sides of the cake with a small metal spatula and spring it out of the tin. Leave to cool completely or eat while still warm with some ice cream, as a pudding.