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Chocolate, almond and date cake

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Ingredients

50g dark cooking chocolate
 2 vanilla beans
 250g unsalted butter
 ¾ cup caster sugar
 6 eggs, separated
 200g fresh dates, finely chopped
 200g ground almonds
 Icing sugar, for dusting

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a deep 23cm round cake tin with baking paper. Chop the chocolate and put in a heatproof bowl. Sit the bowl over a pan of simmering water and stir with a metal spoon until the chocolate has melted and is smooth. Set aside to cool. Split the vanilla beans and scrape out and keep the seeds.
2. Put the butter in a small bowl, add the sugar, then beat until the mixture is creamy and pale. Add the egg yolks and vanilla seeds. Beat ingredients till well combined. Transfer mixture to a large mixing bowl.
3. Add the dates, ground almonds and chocolate to the creamed mixture. Fold through until well combined. Beat the eggwhites till soft peaks form, then fold through the chocolate mixture. Pour it into the cake tin, bake for 50-60 minutes or until a baking skewer comes out clean when inserted in the centre. Remove from the oven, stand on a wire rack for 10 minutes, then turn out to cool. Sift icing sugar over the cake.

Notes

- Always stir chocolate with a dry metal spoon. Wooden spoons hold moisture which can cause the chocolate to seize.
- You can use plump dry dates or raisins instead of fresh dates.

Author: Better Homes and Gardens Magazine

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