Chocolate & Courgette Cake

Ingredients

- 350g self-raising flour
- 50g cocoa powder
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 175ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 375g golden caster sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 500ml grated courgette*(see note)

(measure by volume in a measuring jug, but it's about 2 medium courgettes; if using 1 overgrown one, peel first and take out seeds)

- 140g roughly chopped toasted hazelnut

For the icing

- 200g chopped dark chocolate
- 100ml double cream

Method

First Stage

1 Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4.

2 In a large bowl, combine the flour, cocoa powder, mixed spice and 1 tsp salt.

3 In another bowl, combine the olive oil, sugar, eggs, vanilla essence and grated courgette.

4 Mix the contents of both bowls until just combined, then fold in the toasted hazelnuts.

5 Line a 24cm cake tin with greaseproof paper and pour in the mixture.

6 Bake for about 40-50 mins, or until a knife inserted into the middle comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 10 mins, then turn this onto a wire rack and leave to cool.

Second Stage

1 Make the icing by putting the chocolate into a bowl

2 Bring cream to the boil in a saucepan. And pour the hot cream over the chocolate.

3 Stir until it is completely smooth and melted and leave the icing to cool slightly and thicken.

4 Spread it over the cake so it's covered and the icing starts to drip down the sides.

*BAKING WITH COURGETTES

Courgettes can hold quite a lot of water, which can affect the finished texture of your cake. If your grated courgettes seem watery, place them into a clean cloth and wring out some of the liquid into a bowl. Then add the courgettes to the cake mixture as normal. The timing for cakes containing courgette can depend on the water content of your courgettes, so return the cake to the oven for another 10 mins if it needs it. Simply test with a skewer and make sure it comes out clean.