

Chocolate Olive Oil Cake

Yield: Makes about 8-12 slices

2/3 cup olive oil, plus extra for greasing the tin
6 tablespoons good-quality unsweetened cocoa, sifted
1/2 cup boiling water
2 teaspoons best vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups ground almonds
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
Pinch salt
1 cup superfine sugar
3 eggs

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease a 9-inch springform pan with some olive oil and line the base with parchment.

Measure and sift the cocoa powder into a bowl or pitcher and whisk in the boiling water until you have a smooth, chocolatey, still-runny (but only just) paste. Whisk in the vanilla extract and then set the bowl aside to cool a little.

In another small bowl, combine the ground almonds with the baking soda and salt.

Put the sugar, olive oil and eggs into the bowl of a freestanding mixer with the paddle attachment and beat together vigorously for about 3 minutes, until you have a pale primrose, aerated and thickened cream.

Turn the speed down a little and pour in the cocoa mixture, beating as you go, and when all is scraped in, slowly tip in the ground almond mixture.

Scrape down the bowl and stir with a spatula. Then, turn out this dark, liquid batter into the prepared pan. 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.

Let it cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack, still in its pan, and then ease the sides of the cake with a small metal spatula or knife and spring it out of the pan. Leave to cool completely or eat while still warm with ice cream or flavoured whipped cream (Amaretto or Grand Marnier work great).

Source: Nigella Lawson's *Nigellissima* cookbook