



COCONUT MASCARPONE CAKE

This is the cake we'll be eating after the ceremony today. You'll find the crumb rich, moist and not overly fluffy, so it will slice well without crumbling and stay soft for a few days. Layer and fill with buttercream, if you like, and pipe a simple decoration around the outside. Makes one large square cake, enough for 25 servings.

350ml coconut milk

125g desiccated coconut

4 tsp vanilla extract

500g caster sugar

75g arrowroot or corn flour

75ml sunflower oil

125g white chocolate, broken into small pieces

200g mascarpone

8 medium eggs

375g plain flour

4 level tsp baking powder

Line the base and sides of a 23cm or 25cm square cake tin with nonstick paper. Bring the coconut milk to a boil, take off the heat, mix in the desiccated coconut and leave for 30 minutes. Beat in the vanilla, sugar and arrowroot. Put the oil and chocolate in a saucepan, warm until it melts, then beat through the coconut mix with the mascarpone. Beat in four whole eggs and four egg yolks, then sift in the flour and

baking powder, and fold through evenly. Whisk the egg whites until stiff, then fold evenly through.

Spoon into the tin, cover loosely with foil - this helps keep the top of the cake level - and bake for about 90 minutes at 170C (150C fan-assisted)/335F/gas mark 3, removing the foil after 45 minutes. When a skewer comes out clean, it's baked. Leave to cool in the tin, then slice it level across the top before decorating.

MASCARPONE BUTTERCREAM

Boiling the mascarpone with sugar first makes it stable for use in a buttercream for piping decorations with. It's ever so rich, so, if you're serving the cake after the meal, a spoonful of tart fruit compote will set it off well. You'll need one batch of buttercream to fill the layers and hold the crumb in place, one more to give the outside a smooth finish and another to decorate with.

250g mascarpone

150g caster sugar

250g icing sugar

250g unsalted butter, softened

Vanilla extract or other flavouring

Spoon the mascarpone into a saucepan, stir in the caster sugar and bring to a boil. Leave to cool, then chill. Using the whisk attachment on an electric mixer, gradually beat the icing sugar and butter, chopped into rough pieces, until light and fluffy, then beat in the chilled mascarpone mixture just until mixed, no more.

Work with the buttercream while it's cool but not fridge-cold, because the texture roughens when the butter gets hard. And if it gets too soft, just chill it a little and whip it gently again.

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