

Blueberry and Orange White Chocolate Speckled Egg Cake

340g (12oz) soft baking margarine or unsalted butter, softened

340g (12oz) caster sugar

6 Large eggs

280g (10oz) self-raising flour, plus a heaped tablespoon

115g (4oz) ground almonds

1 ½ teaspoons baking powder

Finely grated zest and juice of a large orange

250g (9 oz) blueberries

300ml (10 floz) double cream, whipped

4 tablespoons orange curd

1 quantity of white chocolate ganache

12 medium sized speckled chocolate eggs

1 tablespoon cocoa powder mixed with 1 ½ tablespoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan, gas mark 4).
2. Grease and base line 3 25cm diameter loose bottomed cake tins.
3. Put all the ingredients except the orange zest, juice and blueberries in a bowl and beat with an electric mixer for a couple of minutes (a little longer if you are doing this by hand).
4. Stir in the orange zest and juice.
5. Cut your blueberries in half and toss them in a heaped tablespoon of flour. I appreciate that this is a little fiddly and time consuming but it is definitely worth it to help stop your blueberries from sinking. It is a quite good job to delegate to any available smaller members of the family with nimble fingers!
6. Divide approximately half the cake batter between the 3 tins and spread it so it is level.
7. Fold the floured blueberries to the remaining batter and then divide this equally between the 3 tins and level, again this is to try and help prevent sinkages.
8. Bake in the preheated oven for approximately 25 minutes until the cakes spring back when you press them.
9. Allow the cakes to cool for a few minutes before running a knife around the edge of the tin to loosen them and transferring onto a rack and leaving to cool completely.
10. Fold 4 tablespoons of the orange curd into the whipped cream and use this to sandwich the 3 cakes together.
11. If you have time freeze the cake at this stage before applying the ganache as this will make the cake much easier to coat.

12. With a palette knife apply a smooth coating of ganache to the sides and top of the cake.
13. Make sure you are not wearing your best white shirt and cover your baking area with baking paper or something similar, it might even be a good idea to do this outside if it's a nice day – this is a messy business!
14. Use a clean new stiff paint brush or toothbrush to flick splatters of the cocoa that has been mixed with vanilla extract all over the surface of the cake so it resembles a speckled egg shell.
15. Use the remaining ganache to fill a piping bag fitted with a 2d piping nozzle (closed star).
16. Pipe 12 swirls around the edge of the cake and sit a speckled egg in the centre of each one.

Orange Curd

Finely grated zest and juice of 2 oranges

Juice of a lemon

2 Large eggs, lightly whisked

170g (6 oz) caster sugar

115g (4 oz) unsalted butter, cubed

1 heaped teaspoon cornflour

1. Put the lightly whisked eggs in a medium saucepan, then add the rest of the ingredients and place the saucepan over a medium heat.
2. Whisk continuously for about 8 minutes until the mixture thickens.
3. Reduce the heat to the lowest setting and gently simmer the curd for a further minute, continuing to whisk.

White chocolate ganache

340g (12 oz) good quality white chocolate, chopped or pellets

250ml (8 fl oz) double cream

100g (3 ½ oz) unsalted butter

Pinch of salt (this helps to temper the sweetness of the white chocolate and it also helps the ganache to set hard)

1. Put all the ingredients in a medium sized saucepan and heat gently, stirring continuously until they have just melted.
2. Pour the ganache into a bowl and leave the ganache to cool.
3. Once cool whip the ganache until it is light and fluffy.

Tips

- I think the brightly coloured flecks of orange zest look particularly attractive when the cake is cut and I also love the pairing of blueberries as a softer alternative to lemon but you can of course go for the classic combination of blueberry and lemon if you prefer.
- If they are in season blood oranges make a delicious curd. I would still add the juice of a lemon to add just a little bit of tartness.
- Any leftover curd can be stored covered in the fridge for up to a week (or longer if put in to sterilised jars) and is wonderful spread on soft buttered white bread or maybe even a hot cross bun.
- This cake also looks beautiful in blue; just add a dab of paste colouring to the ganache.

