

Sachertorte (Chocolate cake)

Serves 8

Preparation & cooking time: 30-40 minutes + 45-50 minutes cooking

For the cake:

225 g plain chocolate, broken into pieces

175 g unsalted butter, softened

150 g caster sugar

5 ml vanilla extract

5 eggs, separated

80 g ground almonds

50 g plain flour

For the filling and icing:

8 tablespoons apricot jam

15 ml lemon juice

30 ml whisky

175 g plain chocolate, broken into pieces

80 g butter, cut into small dice

80 g double cream

50 g milk chocolate, broken into pieces

1. Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 4/electric oven 180°C/fan oven 160°C. Grease and line the base of a 20 cm cake tin with baking parchment.
2. Melt the chocolate by placing it in a bowl and set it over a pan of barely simmering hot water. Stir and allow to cool. Meanwhile, whisk the butter and sugar in another bowl until the mixture is light and creamy. Beat in the vanilla extract followed by the egg yolks, one at a time. Add the ground almonds and flour and mix in thoroughly. Whisk the egg whites until they are stiff in a large spotlessly clean bowl. Add a large spoonful to the chocolate mixture and beat in to loosen the mixture. Add the remaining whites and fold them in gently using a figure-of-eight action.
3. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin, level the surface and bake for 45-50 minutes until the cake has risen and is firm to the touch. Allow to cool for a few minutes in the tin, and then turn out and cool completely on a wire rack.
4. Heat the apricot jam with the lemon juice and sieve it. Cut the cake in half horizontally. Sprinkle the whisky over the cut surfaces. Place the bottom half on a plate and spread the cut surface with a third of the jam mixture. Place the other cake half on top. Spread the remaining jam all over the top and sides of the cake and then leave it to set.
5. Melt the plain chocolate as in Step 2. Remove the bowl from the heat and stir in the butter until it has melted. Stir in the cream and leave the sauce to thicken a little so that it will spread easily. Pour the chocolate icing on to the cake and spread it evenly all over. Leave it to set.
6. Melt the milk chocolate as in Step 2. Spoon it into a small disposable piping bag or plastic food bag and snip off a small corner. Pipe the name 'Sacher' across the top and, once again, leave it to set.