

Chocolate Slab Cake

Cake

- 1³/₄ cups (440ml) boiling water
- 170g (6oz) dark chocolate, chopped finely (we use Callebaut callets)
- 1 cup (110g) unsweetened cocoa
- 2 cups (300g) plain (all purpose) flour
- 2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), sifted
- good pinch salt
- 285g (10oz) unsalted butter, softened
- 1³/₄ cups (packed) (380g) brown sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 175C (350F) with fan. Line the base and sides of a large roasting pan with parchment paper (Bake). I do this by squishing an extra-large sheet of Bake into the pan and pleating the corners, or snipping with scissors and overlapping them. My tray is 37 x 27 x 5cm (14¹/₂" x 10¹/₂" x 2"), but the recipe is quite flexible, so use whatever you have on hand and adjust your cooking time accordingly.

2. In a medium bowl, pour the boiling water over the dark chocolate and let it sit for five minutes. Add the cocoa and stir until the mixture is smooth. Allow to cool while you prepare the rest of the cake.

3. In another bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt. Don't whinge about all the bowls you're using, it's worth it.

4. In a large mixing bowl with an electric mixer, cream the butter and brown sugar, then add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in the vanilla, then add all the flour mixture and half the chocolate mixture. Beat on low speed to combine, then on high for 1¹/₂ minutes. Add remaining chocolate mixture and beat on low to combine.

5. Pour the batter into the roasting pan and bake for 30 - 40 minutes, until a thin sharp knife inserted into the centre comes out clean. Be careful not to overcook it. Remove the cake from the oven, but leave it in the pan. Allow to cool a little while you prepare the icing.

Icing

- 100g (3³/₄oz) dark chocolate callets, or finely chopped chocolate
- 100g (3³/₄oz) unsalted butter
- 100g (3³/₄oz) icing sugar, sifted (it's important to sift, or you'll get lumpy icing)
- 3 Tbsp (60ml) milk

Melt all ingredients in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, stirring constantly until well blended. Pour the finished icing over the warm cake, jiggling the pan around so that it's all evenly coated. Let it sit for say another 15 minutes or so, then put the whole thing into the fridge to set.

The cake can be kept at room temperature once the icing is set.