

Muscovado chocolate cakes with cocoa nibs and Mayan spiced syrup.

Moist and sticky with crunchy cocoa nibs and an aromatic sweet-spiced syrup, these cakes are the perfect dessert served warm with real vanilla ice cream or cold with rooibos or Earl Grey tea.

For the cakes

110g self-raising flour
65g dark cocoa powder, the best quality you can buy**
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
185g unsalted butter
225g unrefined Muscovado sugar
85ml double cream
2 medium free-range eggs
50g cracked cocoa nibs**

For the syrup

200g unrefined golden caster sugar
1/2 teaspoon fresh nutmeg, grated**
1 cinnamon stick, broken in half**
1/2 teaspoon chilli powder

Preheat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / gas 4

Place the flour, cocoa, salt and butter in a large mixing bowl. Rub between your fingers until the mixture has the consistency of breadcrumbs. Add the sugar and mix well.

Fill a measuring jug with 85ml water, then add the cream and eggs. Whisk well, then pour into the dry mixture. Mix until smooth

For the cupcake cases, you can either use shop-bought paper cases or, for a more contemporary style, make them yourself using non-sticky baking parchment: cut 15cm square of parchment paper, scrunch them up tight in your hand, then open them out just enough to fit into your muffin tin.

Fill each case three-quarters full with cake mixture and sprinkle over plenty of cocoa nibs. Bake for 12-15 minutes until springy to the touch. Remove from the muffin tin and place on a wire rack to cool.

To make the sugar syrup, bring 200ml water, the sugar and all the spices to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to infuse for 15 minutes. Strain through a sieve into a jug.

While the cakes are still warm, slowly and gradually feed each one an even amount of syrup until glossy, allowing the syrup to soak fully into the cakes. If serving as a plated dessert, save some syrup to drizzle over and around the cakes.

****available at the Somerset Grocer
www.somersetgrocer.co.nz**