

Vegan Chocolate Cake

225 gr plain flour, or gluten free flour
 1½ teaspoons bicarbonate of soda
 ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
 1½ teaspoons instant espresso powder
 75 gr cocoa
 300 gr soft dark brown sugar
 375 ml hot water from a boiled kettle
 75 gr coconut oil (90ml)
 1½ teaspoons cider vinegar
 1 teasp Xanthan gum (if using gluten free flour)

FOR THE ICING

60 ml cold water
 75 gr coconut butter (this is not the same as oil)
 50 gr soft dark sugar
 1½ teaspoons instant espresso powder
 1½ tablespoons cocoa
 150 gr 70% dark chocolate, finely chopped

Based on a recipe from Nigella Lawson

You will need a 20cm/8in round springform cake tin. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/350°F/gas mark 4 and pop in a baking sheet at the same time. Put all the icing ingredients except the chopped chocolate into a bowl, melt in microwave. Quickly add the finely chopped chocolate and swirl the pan so the chocolate can melt. Leave for a scant minute, then whisk until you have a darkly glossy icing, and leave to cool.

Line the bottom of your springform cake tin (you will need a good, leakproof one as this is a very wet batter) with baking parchment.

Put the flour, bicarb, salt, instant espresso and cocoa in a bowl and fork to mix. Mix together the sugar, water, coconut oil and vinegar until the coconut oil has melted, and stir into the dry ingredients, then pour into the prepared tin and bake for 35 minutes - though do check at the 30-minute mark to see if it is already done.

When it's ready, the cake will be coming away from the edges of the tin and a cake tester will come out clean, apart from a few crumbs. This is a fudgy cake and you don't want to overdo it. Once the cake is cooked, transfer the tin to a wire rack and let the cake cool in its tin.

Turn to your icing, and give it a good stir with a spatula to check it is at the right consistency. It needs to be runny enough to cover the cake, but thick enough to stay (mostly) on the top.

The cake can be made ahead and frozen, without icing. When cool, carefully wrap cake in a double layer of clingfilm and a layer of foil. Freeze for up to 3 months. To defrost, unwrap and place on a serving plate at room temperature for 3–4 hours.

