

Chocolate Fruitcake

INGREDIENTS

12 oz dried soft prunes, chopped
9 oz raisins
4 oz currants
1 1/2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
3/4 cup dark sugar (muscovado if possible)
3/4 cup honey
1/2 cup coffee liqueur
2 oranges, zested and juiced
1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
2 Tbsp good quality cocoa powder
3 eggs, beaten
2/3 cup flour
1/3 cup ground almonds
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda

Preheat the oven to 300°.

Line the sides and bottom of an 8 x 3 1/2" deep, round loose-bottomed cake tin with a layer of baking parchment. When lining the tin with the parchment, cut the material into strips that are twice as high as the tin itself (it is easier to use two shorter strips of parchment, than one long strip); the height of the strips protects the cake from catching on the outside of the cake tin.

Place the fruit, butter, sugar, honey, coffee liqueur, orange zest and juice, mixed spice and cocoa into a large wide saucepan. Heat the mixture until it reaches a gentle boil, stirring the mixture as the butter melts. Let the mixture simmer for 10 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat and leave to stand for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, the mixture will have cooled a little. Add the eggs, flour, ground almonds, baking powder and baking soda, and mix well with a wooden spoon or spatula until the ingredients have combined.

Carefully pour the fruitcake mixture into the lined cake tin. Bake for 1 3/4 to 2 hours, or until the top of the cake is firm but has a shiny and sticky look. At this point, if you insert a sharp knife into the middle of the cake, the cake should still be a little uncooked in the middle. Place the cake on a cooling rack. Once the cake has cooled, remove it from the tin.

To decorate, place some chocolate-covered coffee beans in the center of the cake and sprinkle some edible gold glitter or sprinkles over the top.