

Chocolate Plum Spice Cake

I decided to get a bit inventive by using mixed spice and plum compote when doing a scale-up test of the chocolate sponge for my black forest cake. As a result I created a chocolate plum spice cake that was very nice indeed. If you have a cake recipe that you love and consistently rely on, why not tinker with it and take it in another direction. We learn to play with savoury food, adding our own touches and omitting ingredients depending on circumstances, but most people rarely muck around with a cake. I think as long as you respect the proportions of eggs, flour and fat, there is certainly room for creative maneuver. I added [mixed spice from Gewürzhaus spice shop](#) to the cake batter. The cassia bark, ginger, nutmeg, allspice and clove mix gave the chocolate cake a lovely deep, Christmas pudding flavour that I contrasted with a home made plum compote. I would recommend using a plum compote similar to the middle European, *powidl*, a cooked down plum paste without the addition of sugar to give some tartness. If you have a plum tree, think about using some of those plums for a compote this summer. Alternatively, you could use black or red currant jam or plum jam. This cake has a rather nice Christmas feel to it and could be popular for families not so fond of traditional Christmas pudding.

Line a rectangular 25 cm x 36 cm x2 cm baking pan with baking paper.

Preheat the oven to 150°C

- 5 eggs, separated
- pinch salt
- 66 g caster sugar
- 33 g icing sugar
- 21 g cocoa powder
- 105 g flour
- 2 tbs neutral vegetable oil

- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 250 g plum compote
- 150 ml pure cream, whipped*
- 60 g dark 70 % cocoa chocolate
- 60 ml cream, extra

Beat the egg whites with a pinch of salt until foaming. Gradually add the caster sugar and beat until stiff but with the tip of the peaks still drooping. Set the beaten white aside and now beat the egg yolks with the icing sugar until pale and thick. Sift the cocoa, flour and spice mix. Fold the beaten egg whites through the beaten egg yolk, followed by the mixed dry ingredients. Add the oil and fold through the mix. Spread the batter evenly in the pan and bake for approximately 10 minutes.

Cool the cake on a wire rack. Once cool peel off the baking paper and then cut the cake in half crosswise and trim edges neatly.

Sandwich the two slabs of cake with plum compote and whipped cream.

Prepare the chocolate ganache by heating the cream in a small saucepan until it comes to the boil. If not using chocolate callets, cut up the chocolate into small pieces and place in a bowl. Add the hot cream to the bowl of chocolate and mix well with a spatula until all the chocolate has melted and is smooth and shiny. When cooling and slightly thickened, pour the ganache over the top of the cake and quickly smooth it out to the edges evenly. Decorate with dried rose petals or edible flowers.

*Tip: add a tablespoon or two of natural yoghurt to the cream and whip to lighten the load.



