



TREWITHEN DAIRY

GLYNN VALLEY · CORNWALL

MARTHA COLLISON'S COFFEE AND WALNUT CAKE

DESCRIPTION

What's your favourite cake? For me, to earn the acclaimed title of 'favourite' (or a least, favourites, because who really just has one favourite cake?!), it has to be an all rounder. Light yet satisfying, simple enough to enjoy regularly, and goes perfectly with a freshly brewed tea or coffee. The cakes you'll find in an English tearoom all meet this criteria, and coffee and walnut cake sits proudly at the top of the list.

It's a proper classic, served up with a pinch of nostalgia. When we used to visit my grandma's house as kids, she'd always lovingly prepare two cakes in advance; chocolate muffins for my sister and coffee and walnut cake for me. You know that thing grandparents tend to do when you declare you love something, and make it every time you go round? Well my grandma would do that exact thing. Every time we went, the cakes would magically appear. Luckily, my enjoyment and delight in coffee and walnut cake was (and remains) unwavering, and I'll always dive in to a slice presented to me.

I like to think of CWC as a victoria sponge on a caffeine high. Beautifully light, sweet sponge with a backbone of rich coffee flavour, and a deceptively balanced icing that teeters between bitter and sweet, so you can eat and eat and eat without it becoming cloying. You'll need powdered instant coffee (sorry to all the high end coffee snobs who would hate to have a jar lingering in the cupboard - oh the shame of instant!) for this cake, and even if you don't drink it, it's worth having for this purpose along. I use a super fine coffee, as it can go straight into the batter. If you've got a more chunky instant coffee, make sure to let it down with a little hot water to make a paste before adding it.

INGREDIENTS

For the sponge:

225g butter, softened
225g caster sugar
4 medium eggs
225g plain flour
1 tbsp baking powder
2 tbsp instant coffee powder (if you have a chunky coffee, dissolve it in 1 tsp of boiling water to make a paste before adding)
1 tbsp milk

For the icing:

150g butter
300g icing sugar
1 tbsp instant coffee dissolved in 1 tbsp boiling water
8 walnut halves, plus extra chopped walnut to decorate

METHOD

1. Grease 2 x 20cm round tins and line with baking parchment and preheat the oven to 180°C/160, gas mark 4.
2. Place the butter, caster sugar, eggs, flour, baking powder, coffee and milk into a large bowl, or the bowl of a stand mixer. Beat with an electric whisk, or paddle attachment of a stand mixer, for 5 minutes, until smooth. Use a spatula to scrape round the bowl a few times during the mixing process to make sure it's well combined.
3. Divide the mixture evenly between the tins and use a spatula to smooth the top. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the cakes are risen, golden and a skewer inserted comes out clean.
4. For the icing, place the butter, icing sugar and coffee paste together in a large bowl. Use an electric hand whisk to beat for a few minutes, or until light and spreadable.
5. Assemble the cake, spreading half of the icing in the middle and half on the top. I use an offset palette knife for this. Decorate with walnut halves and crushed walnuts.