



SUGGESTED RECIPES FOR *JUST DESSERTS* EVENING

Chewy Chocolate Brownies

Here is a recipe for some deliciously chewy brownies. Take care not to overcook them!

- 200g dark chocolate
- 200g butter
- 2 cups of sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 1 cup of plain flour

Melt the chocolate and butter together, stir until it is smooth and well blended. Mix in sugar, eggs and vanilla essence and stir in the flour. Pour into a well greased brownie tin (or similar) approx. 20 X 30 cm. Bake at 180°C/gas mark 4 for 20-25 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out with fudgy crumbs! Cool in the tin and cut into squares. Store in an airtight container. Makes approx. 20 brownies.

Lovely Lemon Mousse

This is very easy and deliciously light, despite the cream!!

- 284 ml double cream
- 1 lemon, juiced and zested
- 60g caster sugar
- 2 egg whites

Put cream, lemon zest and sugar into a large bowl and whisk to thicken. Add lemon juice and whisk again to thicken, but don't overdo it. Whisk egg whites in a separate bowl until they are at the soft peak stage and fold into lemon cream mixture. Spoon into glasses or ramekins and chill. Feeds 4.

Lemon Ginger Pudding

Another really easy pudding. No cooking involved (apart from melting a little butter) and irresistible!

- 1 packet ginger biscuits
- 50g butter
- 397g tin of sweetened condensed milk
- 280 ml double cream
- 3 large lemons

Place biscuits in an airtight plastic food bag and crush with a rolling pin. Melt butter in a pan and add crushed biscuits. Press into a loose-bottomed metal flan tin (23cm) and chill in fridge until set. Beat the cream until stiff. Add sweetened condensed milk. Beat until thick again and then add the lemon juice and a little finely grated zest for extra flavour if you wish! Mix all together and then put filling into biscuit case and place in fridge until set. Serves 8-10.

Raspberries with Mascarpone in a Chocolate Crust

Here is another easy recipe with almost no cooking.

- 225g plain chocolate
- 225g Hobnob biscuits
- 2 x 250g tubs of mascarpone cheese
- 1 x 200 ml carton of full-fat crème fraiche

- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 700g raspberries
- 3-4 tablespoons redcurrant jelly
- Caster sugar to taste (the glaze will be sweet)

Take a 25cm spring-release tin and line with a double layer of cling film. Melt the chocolate in a bowl placed over a pan of gently simmering water. Alternatively melt the chocolate in a microwave. Crush the biscuits in a plastic food bag and add to the warm melted chocolate. When blended, using the back of a metal spoon, press mixture into the lined tin to about 5cm deep around the edge. Put in fridge to set. Mix the mascarpone cheese, crème fraiche, vanilla extract and sugar together. Remove the base from fridge once set and release the spring-release clip of the tin. Pull the cling film to remove the chocolate case from the tin. Put the chocolate biscuit shell on a large plate. Spread the filling over the chocolate base and cover the filling with raspberries. Heat the redcurrant jelly adding water if necessary and brush over the raspberries. Decorate with a sprig of mint if available. Serve at room temperature. Serves 8-10.

Wonderful Apple Dessert Cake

Delicious served with ice-cream, crème fraiche, or for the traditional amongst us, custard!! It is best served warm, but can be made the day before and heated up in a moderate oven when needed.

- 225g self-raising flour
- 1 level tsp baking powder
- 225g caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ tsp almond extract
- 150g butter, melted
- 350g cooking apples, peeled and cored
- 25g flaked almonds

Grease a deep 20cm loose-bottomed cake-tin. Measure the flour, baking powder, sugar, eggs, almond extract and melted butter into a bowl, mix well until blended then beat for a minute. Spread half of this mixture into the tin. Thickly slice the apples and lay on top of the mixture in the tin, piling them mostly towards the centre. Roughly spoon the remaining mixture over the apples. Make sure the mixture covers the centre well as it will spread out in the oven. Sprinkle with the

flaked almonds. Cook in a preheated oven at 160°C/gas mark 3 for 1 ½ hours until golden and just shrinking away from the sides of the tin. Serves 6-8.

Banoffee Pie

A favourite with pudding lovers and even better, no cooking involved!!

- 20 digestive biscuits
- 50g butter
- 3-4 bananas
- 200ml whipping cream
- A jar of Dulce de Leche (toffee sauce which can be found in most supermarkets)
- A little finely grated chocolate or chocolate powder to decorate

Melt the butter in a pan and then crush the digestives in a plastic bag using a rolling pin. Add crushed digestives to melted butter and mix. Press this mixture into a greased 20cm loose-bottomed flan tin and place in fridge to set. Whip the cream until thick (but don't overdo it). Once the crust is set, spread the contents of the dulce de leche jar onto the base, (you may not need it all), slice up the bananas into pennies and arrange over the dulce de leche. Spread over the whipped cream. To finish, grate some chocolate onto the cream or sift a little chocolate powder to decorate. Heaven!!

Rich Chocolate Mousse

A popular dessert for chocolate lovers! Make sure you use good quality chocolate that has a high percentage in cocoa solids.

- 440g plain dessert chocolate
- 8 eggs separated

Break the chocolate up into small squares, place them in a basin fitted over a pan of barely simmering water. Stir until the chocolate is melted and becomes a smooth liquid. Remove from the heat. Beat the egg yolks and add them to the chocolate while it's still hot, beating thoroughly. Leave the mixture to cool for about 15 minutes. Then beat up the egg whites – not too stiffly, just to the soft peak stage – then fold them into the chocolate mixture. Next spoon the mixture into a serving bowl or into individual ramekin dishes. Cover with cling film and chill until firm. Serves 8.

Pavlova

A big meringue piled high with whipped cream and summer fruits. Delicious! In the winter when soft fruits are very expensive to buy, this could be made with other fruit such as banana, kiwi or mango.

- 3 large fresh eggs
- 175g caster sugar
- 275 ml whipping cream
- 350g raspberries and/or strawberries
- A little icing sugar

Preheat the oven to gas mark 2, 150°C. Line a lightly oiled baking sheet with silicone paper. Place the egg whites in a large clean bowl and have the sugar measured and ready. Now whisk the egg whites with an electric hand whisk, until they form soft peaks. When they're ready, start to whisk in the sugar, one teaspoon at a time until it is all whisked in. Take a large metal spoon and spoon the meringue mixture onto the prepared baking sheet forming a circle about 8ins in diameter, making the edges a little higher than the centre. Place the baking sheet in the oven, then immediately turn down the heat to gas mark 1, 140°C and leave it to cook for 1 hour. Then turn the heat right off but leave the pavlova inside the oven until it's completely cold. (It can be left overnight to dry out completely).

Now lift the Pavlova off the baking sheet and peel off the silicone paper and place it on a serving dish. Whip the cream and spread onto the meringue and then pile on the fresh strawberries and raspberries and dust with a little sifted icing sugar. Serves 6-8.

Cheat's Chocolate Trifle

Once you have bought all the ingredients for this, and after the cherries have soaked in the rum overnight, this can be put together in moments.

- 3 double-chocolate-chip American-style muffins
- 200g dark chocolate (75% cocoa solids)
- 1 x 680g jar pitted morello cherries, drained and soaked overnight in 75ml dark rum
- 2 tablespoons morello cherry jam or conserve
- 250g Mascarpone

- 400g fresh custard

- 275ml whipping cream

Soak the drained cherries in the rum overnight. The next day, slice the muffins horizontally in half, then spread each slice with some jam and stick the muffins back to their original muffin shape.

Now cut each one vertically into 4 pieces approx. 2cm wide, and lay these all around the base of a trifle bowl or serving dish. Now take a skewer and stab them to make holes, then strain off the rum the cherries have been soaking in and sprinkle it all over the muffins, scattering the cherries on top.

Now, reserving 50g of the chocolate for decoration, break the rest up into squares. Place the broken-up chocolate in a large heatproof bowl, which should be sitting over a saucepan of barely simmering water, making sure the bowl doesn't touch the water. Then, keeping the heat at its lowest, allow the chocolate to melt slowly whilst stirring. Let the chocolate cool for 2-3 minutes.

While that's happening, put the Mascarpone in a bowl and beat to soften it, then add the custard and whisk them together. Next whisk in the cooled melted chocolate, then pour the whole lot over the soaked muffins and cherries. Now whip the cream to the floppy stage, then carefully spoon this over the trifle, spreading it out with a palette knife. Lastly shred the remaining chocolate very finely with a knife, using a piece of foil to protect it from the heat of your fingers as you steady it).

Sprinkle the shreds over the surface of the trifle, cover with cling film and chill until needed. Serves 8.