

Flourless Chocolate & Pear Cake



Serves 8 **Prep 20 mins**

Cooking 40 mins

Easy

Ingredients

85g butter, plus 1 tbsp extra for tin
85g golden caster sugar, plus extra for tin
85g gluten-free dark chocolate, broken into pieces
1 tbsp brandy
3 eggs, separated
85g hazelnuts, toasted & ground in a food processor
4 very ripe pears, peeled, halved & cored
icing sugar, for dusting

1. Cut a circle of baking parchment to fit the base of a 25cm loose-bottomed tin. Melt 1 tbsp butter and brush the inside of the tin, then line the base with the parchment and brush again with more butter. Spoon in 2 tbsp caster sugar, swirl it around to coat the base and sides, then tip out any excess.
2. Heat oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Melt the chocolate and butter in a bowl over a pan of hot water, remove from the heat, stir in the brandy and leave to cool. Whisk the egg yolks with the sugar in a large bowl until pale and thick; fold into the chocolate with the hazelnuts.
3. In a separate bowl, with a clean whisk, beat the whites until they reach a soft peak (try not to whisk them too stiffly or you'll have trouble folding them in). Stir a spoonful of the whites into the chocolate mix, then carefully fold in the rest of them in 2 additions. Spoon into the prepared tin. Level, then arrange the pears over the mixture, cut-side down. Bake for 40 mins until the pears are soft and the cake is cooked all the way through. Leave to cool in the tin slightly before releasing it, then place on a rack to cool completely. Dust with icing sugar and serve with crème fraîche.