

Queen of Hearts Cake



Challenging

Fat 22g

349 kcals



Serves 16

Prep 1 hour

Cook 25-30 mins

Chilling 5 Hours

For The Sponges:

Drizzle of flavourless oil such as sunflower for greasing

5 large eggs, separated

175g/6oz golden caster sugar

zest and juice of 1 lemon

1tsp vanilla extract

85g/3oz fine semolina

25g/1oz ground almonds

1 tbsp poppy seeds

Filling and Assembly:

About 650g/1lb 7oz strawberries, hulled

200g/7 oz icing sugar, plus extra to serve

4 gelatine leaves

750ml/1 lb 10oz whipping cream

For the sponges

1. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Grease and line the bases of 2 x 22-23cm straight-sided, loose-bottomed square tins or 2 round tins.
2. To make the sponges, put the eggs yolks and sugar in a large mixing bowl and beat with an electric whisk until pale. Add the lemon zest and juice, vanilla, semolina, almonds & poppy seeds & whisk again just to mix.
3. Clean your beaters, and beat the egg whites in a separate bowl to stiff peaks. Add a quarter of the egg whites to the other mixture and stir well to loosen. Add the remaining egg whites and, using a big metal spoon, gently fold in until no big lumps of egg white remain. Divide the mixture between the tins, spread the top to smooth and bake for 20 mins until springy to touch and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave the sponges to cool in the tins.
4. When the sponges are cool, start to prepare the filling. Put 400g of the strawberries and the icing sugar in a food processor or blender and whizz to a really smooth puree. Transfer to a saucepan and gently warm. Meanwhile, soak the gelatine leaves in a bowl of cold water.

For the filling and assembly

1. When the puree is hot but you can still put your fingers in it, squeeze out the excess water from the gelatine, take the puree off the heat and stir in the gelatine to melt. Pour into a bowl and put in the fridge to quickly cool. Whip the cream until it is thick and holding peaks.
2. Halve the remaining strawberries and trim so they're the same length - so when they are sitting on the sponges, they don't come above the top of the tin. Line up the strawberries all the way along the edge of one of the cakes, cut sides flat against the side of the tin. When the puree is cool, fold through the whipped cream until evenly mixed, then pile into the tin, spreading to fill all the strawberry corners and smooth the surface.
3. Remove the remaining sponge from its tin. Turn the cake onto the mousse to top, and peel away the paper. Gently press into the mousse to stick and chill for 5 hours or overnight to set.
4. Just before serving, dust heavily with icing sugar. Serve immediately. Will keep in the fridge for up to 2 days.