

# Chocolate and strawberry Halloween cake

By Kirsten Tibballs

**3 hours**

Preparation time

**1 hour 30 minutes**

Cooking time

**12 serves**

Serves



## INGREDIENTS

### Chocolate cake

260 g unsalted butter, softened  
450 g caster sugar  
1 tsp vanilla bean paste  
Pinch of salt flakes  
5 eggs, room temperature  
250 g plain flour  
1 tsp baking powder  
45 g Dutch processed cocoa powder  
120 ml full cream milk

### White chocolate buttercream

305 g fresh cream 35% fat  
410 g good quality white chocolate  
460 g caster sugar  
8 egg whites, room temperature  
Pinch of cream of tartar  
Pinch of salt flakes  
305 g unsalted butter, cubed and chilled  
2cm cubes  
Orange food colour gel  
Red food colour gel

### Strawberry compote

600 g strawberries, cubed  
200 g caster sugar  
12 g pectin  
30 ml lemon juice

## METHOD

### Chocolate cake

1. Preheat the oven on Fan Plus at 160°C.
2. Grease and line 2 cake tins, 18 cm in diameter.
3. In the bowl of a freestanding mixer with a paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar, vanilla and salt until light and fluffy, 3-4 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as required.
4. In a separate bowl, break up the eggs, then gradually add them to the butter mixture, mixing well after each addition.
5. Sieve the flour, baking powder and cocoa powder.
6. Fold the sieved ingredients through, alternating with the milk.
7. Divide the mixture evenly between the 2 prepared cake tins.
8. Bake in the preheated oven on shelf level 2 for 55-60 minutes.
9. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely.
10. Once cool, trim the tops off each cake then cut in half.

### White chocolate buttercream

1. Preheat the oven on Fan Plus at 180°C.
2. Place the cream in a small saucepan over high heat, induction setting 9, and bring to the boil.
3. Pour the hot cream over the white chocolate and whisk until the chocolate has completely melted and combined. Allow the ganache to cool at room temperature.
4. Spread the sugar over a baking tray. Turn the oven off and place the sugar into the oven. Close the oven door and allow the sugar to heat for 10 minutes.
5. In the bowl of a freestanding mixer with a whisk attachment, whip the egg whites, cream of tartar, salt and hot sugar until the meringue reaches medium peaks.
6. Add the butter, a piece at a time, followed by the white chocolate ganache.
7. Remove approximately 200 g of the buttercream. Colour this buttercream with the orange and red colour gel to achieve a bright orange colour. Set aside until required.

### Hints and tips

- After adding the butter and ganache, the buttercream may appear to separate. Continue mixing until it comes together.

### Strawberry compote

1. In a small bowl, whisk the sugar and pectin to avoid lumps.
2. In a medium saucepan, place the strawberries and sugar-pectin mixture. Cook over medium heat, induction setting 6, until the compote thickens and the strawberries just begin to break down, approximately 6 minutes.
3. Add the lemon juice and mix to combine.
4. Remove from the heat and allow to cool completely.

### Strawberry soak

1. Combine the strawberries, sugar and vanilla in a small saucepan.
2. Place on low heat, induction setting 4, and cook for 12 minutes, gently stirring, to form a syrup.
3. Set aside and strain to remove the strawberries prior to use.