

Plant-based Christmas Fruit Cake

Cake

200 g dried fruit, finely chopped, mixture of dates, dried cranberries, dried figs, prunes and dried apricots

1 tablespoon orange zest

50 g walnuts, finely chopped

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon mixed ground spice, nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves

Generous amount brandy

60 g coconut oil
200 ml unsweetened almond milk

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Pinch salt

150 g ground almonds

150 g gluten-free flour

2 heaped teaspoons baking powder

1/4 teaspoon baking soda

1. Place the dried fruit, orange zest, walnuts, ginger, cinnamon, mixed spice in a bowl, and add a generous amount of brandy, until everything is roughly covered.
2. Keep covered in the fridge for around 24 hours, to allow the flavours to develop.
3. Before making the cake, preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius.
4. Place the coconut oil in a large bowl and melt over a saucepan of boiling water.
5. Once melted, add the milk to the same bowl along with the lemon juice, vanilla, salt and ground almonds
6. Sift in the flour, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda.
7. Add the dried fruit mixture (along with any residual brandy), adding a tiny splash more milk if it's looking too dry
8. Transfer the mixture into a baking tin lined with greased baking paper (18cm spring form tin).
9. Bake in oven for around 30 minutes until risen and an inserted skewer comes out clean.
10. Once cooked, leave to cool completely before frosting the cake.

Buttercream

100 g raw cashew nuts soaked in cold water overnight

2 tablespoons maple syrup

4 tablespoons unsweetened almond milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Drain soaked cashews and add to a food processor along with all the other ingredients.
2. Whizz until completely smooth.
3. Taste and adjust flavour if necessary, adding more maple syrup, salt or vanilla if needed.
4. Leave the buttercream to cool before using to frost the cake.

TO FROST AND DECORATE:

1. Once the cake has cooled completely, place onto a large plate or cake stand.
2. Use a spatula or knife to cover the top and sides of the cake.