



BLACK CHERRY CHOCOLATE AND MERINGUE ICE CREAM CAKE

The ultimate prepare-ahead summer pudding and an inexpensive way of feeding a lot of people.
It makes a lovely birthday cake too!

Serves 12 – 16

100 g (3½ oz) dark chocolate
1 x 400 g tin of black cherries in syrup, or a jar of
Opies Black Cherries in Kirsch
250 g (9 oz) (10 tbs) black cherry conserve or
jam

600 ml (1 pt) double cream
85 g (3 oz) meringue nests (5 – 6 nests)
To Serve – fresh cherries (with stalks), a handful of
chopped pistachios, icing sugar

1. Line the base of a 23 - 24cm (9 – 9½ in) spring-form tin with a square piece of baking paper, leaving the excess sticking out from the sides.
2. Melt the chocolate in a small bowl suspended over a pan of boiling water (or sit on top of an Aga). Drain the cherries over a small saucepan to retain the syrup. Roughly process or chop the cherries into a chunky, textured pulp. Stir the conserve or jam in a small bowl to loosen it.
3. In a food mixer or large mixing bowl, whip the cream until just beginning to thicken and barely holding its shape – under-whip! Pour in the jam, followed by the meringue, breaking and crumbling it into irregular shapes and sizes as you go. Then fold into the cream very loosely and gently, leaving a ripple effect.
4. Spread ⅓ of the mixture into the tin. Top with the chopped cherries, which is easiest done by spooning them onto the cream in blobs, then spreading by joining the blobs. Spread over ½ of the remaining cream using same technique; dribble over all but 2 - 3tsp of the melted chocolate and spread to cover the cream. Finally, spread over the last of the cream. Using a spatula or the back of a tablespoon gently push the mixture down into the tin to get rid of any air pockets. Cover with cling film, directly onto the surface of the cake, and freeze until solid. Overnight is best.
5. Boil the cherry syrup fast, until syrupy and reduced to around 2 tbs. It will thicken up when it's cold. (If it's too thick when cold loosen with a smidge of boiling water.)
6. Serve the cake straight from the freezer. Un-mould onto a large platter. Drizzle the melted reserved chocolate artistically (!) from a teaspoon zigzagging over the cake, its edges, and onto the platter, and repeat with some of the syrup. Pile some fresh cherries in the middle, scatter with pistachios and a dusting of icing sugar. Cut firmly with a large sharp chopping knife.

Get-Ahead

- Make to the end of Step 4 up to a month in advance. Remove from the tin anytime once it's frozen and store wrapped in cling-film. Step 6 can be done anytime in advance, although bear in mind it will take up more freezer space. The syrup will keep for a month in the fridge but freeze for any longer. The reserved chocolate for decorating will keep indefinitely. Re-melt when required.
- The cake can be sliced in advance, arranged attractively on a platter and re-frozen. In which case drizzle the chocolate once the slices are arranged, and not over the cake as a whole. This is also a good way re-presenting a half eaten/leftover cake – no one will know!

Hints & Tips

- If using tinned cherries, 1 tbs of Cherry Brandy or Amaretto is a nice addition when reducing the syrup.