



Délice de Chocolat

A delectable dessert to impress your friends. A perfect dinner party dish: allow plenty of time to prepare this recipe - but it is worth the effort!

SERVES (YIELD): 4
DIFFICULTY RATING: ●●●
PREPARATION TIME: 60 MINUTES
COOKING TIME: N/A

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Baking tray
14cm x 20cm x 3cm mould or loose bottomed cake tin
(NB any loose bottomed cake tin - square, rectangular or round - will work well for this recipe)

PLANNING AHEAD:

The praline base needs to be chilled for 30 minutes. Once the chocolate filling has been added to the base, it needs to be chilled for 6-12 hours to set.

INGREDIENTS

For the base

100g /3½oz cornflakes, slightly crushed
200g/7oz ready-made praline, slightly warmed

For the delice

140ml/5fl oz full-fat milk
325ml/11½fl oz whipping cream
2 free-range eggs
340g/12oz good-quality dark chocolate, minimum 60 per cent cocoa solids, roughly chopped

For the caramel hazelnuts

150g/5oz caster sugar
8 hazelnuts, shells removed, lightly toasted in a dry frying pan

For the coffee foam

100ml/3½fl oz strong black espresso coffee
1 sheet gelatine, soaked in cold water for 10 minutes and drained

To serve

2-3 tbsp cocoa powder
1 tbsp freshly ground coffee beans
Nearest underground: Farringdon

METHOD

- 1 For the base, place the cornflakes and praline into a mixing bowl and scrunch them together, using your hands, until the cornflakes have broken down and been incorporated into the praline.
- 2 Line a baking tray with a sheet of greaseproof paper, then transfer the praline mixture onto it. Cover the praline mixture with a second sheet of greaseproof paper, then roll the mixture out until it measures at least 14cm x 20cm/6in x 8in and is 0.5cm/¼in thick.
- 3 Remove the top sheet of greaseproof paper, then push a 14cm x 20cm x 3cm/6in x 8in x 1in mould down onto the praline mixture and trim off any excess. (NB: The excess praline mixture can be pressed into the corners of the mould, if necessary.)
- 4 Cover the mould with greaseproof paper and chill the praline in the fridge for 30 minutes, or until set.
- 5 Meanwhile, for the delice, heat the milk and cream in a saucepan and heat gently over a medium heat until it just reaches boiling point.
- 6 Meanwhile, whisk the eggs in a bowl.
- 7 As the milk and cream mixture comes to the boil, pour in the eggs, then reduce the heat to low and continue to whisk the mixture constantly until it is smooth and thick enough to coat the back of a spoon.
- 8 Stir in the chopped chocolate and whisk constantly until the chocolate has melted and the custard is smooth.
- 9 When the base has set, remove it from the fridge and pour in the chocolate delice to fill the mould. Gently tap the sides of the mould to release any trapped air bubbles, then smooth the surface using a palette knife. Chill in the fridge for 6-12 hours, or until completely set.
- 10 Meanwhile, for the caramel hazelnuts, place a piece of polystyrene or a cork board onto a work surface.
- 11 Heat the caster sugar in a pan over a low heat, stirring continuously until golden-brown and caramelised. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool slightly. (NB: The caramel is cool enough when a cocktail stick dragged across its surface leaves an imprinted trail.)

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12 Spear each hazelnut onto a cocktail stick, then dip the hazelnuts into the caramel until coated. Stick each hazelnut into the polystyrene or cork

13 board at an angle, so that the caramel drips off and creates a tail.

(NB: Place a baking tray or sheets of greaseproof paper underneath the polystyrene or cork board to catch any caramel that drips.)

14 Set the caramel hazelnuts aside to cool and harden for at least 30 minutes.

15 For the coffee foam, just before serving, heat half of the coffee in a pan until warmed through.

16 Squeeze the gelatine sheet dry, then add it to the warm coffee and continue to heat until the gelatine has completely dissolved.

17 Pour the remaining cold coffee into a bowl, then add the hot coffee mixture to it. Whisk well until the mixture starts to foam.

18 To serve, heat the outside of the mould using a chefs' blow torch to loosen the base of the delice. Carefully remove the mould from the delice.

19 Heat the top of the delice very quickly using a chefs' blow torch to make the surface glossy. Dust the delice with some of the cocoa powder and ground coffee beans.

20 Smear a teaspoonful of the coffee foam across the width of six to eight serving plates. Plunge the blade of a knife into boiling water to heat the metal, then slice the delice into six to eight pieces and place one onto each smear of foam, at an angle. Pile some caramel hazelnuts alongside each serving. Dust each serving with the remaining cocoa powder.