



Chocolate forest cake

SERVES 10 **PREP** 1 hr plus cooling and chilling **COOK** 25 mins **DIFFICULTY** More effort

Smooth chocolate bark, soft sponge and cute decorations to boot! This tree-inspired treat will make your Christmas

What you'll need

225g softened unsalted butter,
plus extra for greasing

100g golden caster sugar

125g light brown muscovado sugar

4 large eggs

1 tbsp Dr. Oetker Madagascar
Vanilla Extract

225g self-raising flour

For the buttercream

200g softened unsalted butter

450g icing sugar

2 tbsp Dr. Oetker Fine Dark Cocoa
Powder

For the decoration

30g Dr. Oetker 54% Dark Chocolate

400g Dr. Oetker White Chocolate

60g Dr. Oetker Ready to Roll
Fondant Icing, white

50g Dr. Oetker Ready to Roll
Fondant Icing, red

sprigs of rosemary or pine,
to decorate



Method

1. Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Grease two 20cm Victoria sandwich tins with butter and line with baking parchment. In a large mixing bowl, beat the butter, caster sugar and muscovado sugar with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, then whisk in the eggs one at a time, adding the Dr. Oetker Madagascar Vanilla Extract with the last one. Finally, beat in the flour. Divide the mixture between the cake tins and bake for 25 mins until golden in colour and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Remove from the oven and allow to cool, before turning onto a wire rack to cool completely.



Tip from Dr. Oetker

For a light and airy sponge, beat the eggs into your mixture a third at a time.



Tip from Dr. Oetker

The raising agent in the flour gets to work as soon as it comes into contact with any 'wet' ingredients, so pop it into the oven straight away for the best rise!

2. To make the buttercream, in a large bowl beat the butter with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy. Add half the icing sugar and combine, before adding the rest and beating again until lighter in colour. Mix in the Dr. Oetker Fine Dark Cocoa Powder, along with a little milk to loosen, if needed.

3. When the cakes are cool, place one on a serving plate or cake stand and top with 6 tbsp of buttercream. Smooth it out, then place the other cake on top. Put the rest of the buttercream on top of the cake, smoothing down the sides to cover completely. Flatten off the top, then swirl with a palette knife to recreate the inside of a log. Chill in the fridge to set.

4. Take 50g of the white Dr. Oetker Ready to Roll Fondant Icing and make 6 varying sized bases for the mushrooms. Next, roll 6 pieces of the red fondant into different sized balls, then flatten slightly and press out the sides to create toadstool caps. Pop them on top of the bases, before using the remaining white icing to roll lots of tiny balls to press onto the toadstool caps.



Tip from Dr. Oetker

Dampening your hands slightly will make creating your small fondant decorations much easier!

5. Line a large baking tray with baking parchment. Microwave the dark chocolate in a microwavable bowl in 30 sec bursts until melted. Using a paint brush, paint the chocolate onto the paper, roughly drawing horizontal lines and random rings and dots to emulate the look of bark. Leave to chill in the fridge while you melt the white chocolate using the same method as above.



Tip from Dr. Oetker

Setting the melted dark chocolate over a bowl of hot water will stop it from hardening, so you'll have more time to paint that lovely bark texture onto the parchment paper.



Tip from Dr. Oetker

When you take the chocolate bark out of the fridge, make sure the chocolate isn't too hard when you come to cut it, otherwise you may end up with some unwanted breakages!

6. When the white chocolate has cooled, pour it over the tray with the set dark chocolate and gently spread with a palette knife so it's approximately 36cm x 25cm. Leave to set completely. Once set, cut in half lengthways, then cut each half into 7 rectangles, so you have 14 pieces of bark. Place the bark around the side of the cake, finishing with the toadstools and a few sprigs of rosemary or pine.