

MACARON CAKE WITH PECANS, CREAM AND STRAWBERRIES



Ingredients

Serves 8–10

- 10g unsalted butter, for greasing
- 80g pecans
- 170g ground almonds
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 3 large eggs, plus 1 large yolk
- 200g caster sugar
- 1 tbsp vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 1 tsp finely grated lemon zest
- 40g flaked almonds

To serve

- 200ml double cream, fridge cold
- 30g icing sugar, plus a little extra for dusting
- Strawberries

This is one of those cakes that looks like it required a lot more effort than it did. The outside goes crackly and golden, the inside stays dense and chewy – somewhere between a cake and a giant macaron, which is exactly what it is. It keeps brilliantly for a few days and actually improves overnight, so it's a good one to make ahead.

Method

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 170°C fan. Grease a 25cm round tart tin and line with a piece of baking parchment large enough to cover the base and sides with a little overhang – don't worry if it's not perfect. Grease the top of the parchment too.
- 2.** Put the pecans into a food processor and blitz until you have fine crumbs, roughly the size of couscous. It won't be as smooth as the ground almonds and that's fine. Tip into a large bowl with the ground almonds and salt and mix to combine.
- 3.** Put the eggs, yolk, caster sugar and 2 teaspoons of the vanilla into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat on medium-high for about 3–3 1/2 minutes until well aerated and noticeably lighter in colour – this is what gives you the crackly crust. Using a spatula, fold in the lemon zest and pecan mixture until just incorporated. Don't overmix it.
- 4.** Pour into the prepared tin and sprinkle evenly with the flaked almonds. Place on a flat baking tray and bake for 35 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool completely in the tin.
- 5.** When ready to serve, whip the cold cream with the icing sugar and remaining teaspoon of vanilla to soft peaks then serve with strawberries.