



Baking without gluten



The cake trolley is nothing but heartache for people who are gluten-intolerant. There is flour, i.e. gluten, in all fine cakes and tarts, and understandably so, as it's the gluten in flour that acts like glue. It brings the dough together and gives it the energy to develop a light, airy structure. Desserts with mousse, meringue or fine fruits manage well without gluten, but who can resist a delicious cake? And isn't a decent birthday cake the best present ever? It's wholly understandable that people can't resist a slice or two.

The saviours here are all cereals and nuts. Almonds, either as flour or simply finely ground, give baked goods a lovely texture and flavour, and they provide a good handful of nutrients. If you prefer walnuts, hazelnuts or pistachios in your baked goods, you're best off grounding the nuts at home (but don't leave them in the blender for too long or you'll end up with nut butter). Buckwheat is related to rhubarb, so there's no wheat in it. Buckwheat flour has a lovely nutty flavour but with slightly bitter notes, so it's best to blend it always with rice, millet or rice flour, as this balances everything out. Tapioca is a gluten-free thickening agent and makes dough smoother. And whoever is a quinoa fan can use quinoa flour, which gives cakes both a lovely structure and a nutty flavour. So you've we've got the ingredients, now we need a bowl. We want to bake an autumnal chocolate cake with nuts and warm spices!

Pre-heat the oven to 180°C. Line a 22cm-diameter, spring form pan with baking paper. Roast 30g of



hazelnuts in a pan or in the oven carefully then roll them in a kitchen towel until the shell comes away. Leave to cool and chop coarsely.

Gently melt 115g of coconut oil (or butter) and 170g of chocolate (at least 70%) in a bain-marie over lightly boiling water. Stir well and leave to cool.

Blend 4 egg yolks and 50g of sugar in a mixer until foamy. Mix 3 tablespoons of full-fat yoghurt, the pulp of one vanilla pod, 75g of ground hazelnuts, 35g of buckwheat flour, 2 pinches of salt, 1 teaspoon of cinnamon, and some clove and ginger powder. Beat the 4 egg yolks in a clean bowl until foamy, then add 50g of sugar continue beating until a shiny mass has been achieved. Fold into the chocolate mixture carefully so that everything remains airy! Stir in the chopped nuts and transfer to the spring form pan. Bake in the middle of the oven for 35–40 minutes (test with a skewer). Leave to cool in the pan for a short time then move to a grid. Sprinkle with some icing sugar before serving and then there's nothing left to stop you enjoying this gluten-free treat!