



Coffee: A Wonderfully Warm Aroma



Nothing smells more like mornings than a freshly brewed cup of coffee – its aroma alone arouses the senses!

Coffee works well with other flavours we use in the colder seasons of the year: vanilla, chocolate, cinnamon or cardamom. You can use these spices to flavour coffee by adding some of the ground spice to coffee powder before you brew it.

Butter and vanilla strengthen the coffee flavour, while a chocolate-coffee combination has a dryer, more intensive taste.

So it is high time you started experimenting with coffee, with and without the coffee machine! It's easily



accomplished by adding a shot of coffee to a cream sauce for mushrooms or pasta. And if you're making the pasta yourself, you can even mix some espresso into the dough.

The darker the coffee beans, the spicier and deeper the flavour. You can add salt and pepper to create a lovely spice rub, or add some olive oil for a marinade to flavour red meat or poultry.

There are several ways of adding coffee to your cooking: you can mix ground coffee with various ground spices, you can add a shot of espresso directly to sauces, and for baking purposes you can dissolve instant coffee powder (freeze-dried) in water (one tablespoon of hot water on one teaspoon of instant coffee powder). Coffee syrup is also easy to make: caramelize 60g of sugar in a pan and deglaze with 200ml of espresso. Let it boil, transfer to a bottle with a lid, and you have your syrup ready to use for cooking, backing or adding the finishing touch to a scoop of ice cream.

Coffee tastes good with cake, but it also tastes good in cake. It gives baked goods a lovely warm flavour. We only have to look to England to see how it's done, as it's traditional there to serve a slice of coffee and walnut cake with afternoon tea. You don't even need a cup of coffee with it. You can choose walnuts, hazelnuts or pecan nuts, as they all work well in this cake.

To make one: pre-heat the oven to 180°C. Line two springform pans (20cm) with baking paper. Beat 175g each of butter and sugar together in the mixer until light and fluffy. Whisk together three eggs and stir gradually into the mixture until smooth. Mix 175g of flour with one tablespoon of baking powder and sieve into the mixture, stirring in well. Dissolve two teaspoons of instant coffee in one tablespoon of boiling water and add 65g of chopped nuts of your choice (e.g. walnuts). Split the mixture between each springform pan, smooth down and bake for 20 to 25 minutes (using a knife or skewer to check that it's cooked). Leave to cool on a metal rack. For the filling, dissolve one tablespoon of instant coffee powder in 2 tablespoons of hot water and leave to cool. Whisk the cream until thick then stir in the coffee. Spread half the cream on one half of the cake, put the other half on top and spread on the rest of the cream. Decorate with a handful of nuts as desired.

A coffee cake topped off with cream: a nice way for the body and soul to wrap up warm, even in the harshest of winters.