

Chocolate and Hazelnut Meringue with Cherry Wine Syrup

Serves 8

Hazelnut Meringue

50g shelled Hazelnuts
4 egg whites
225 g caster sugar

Chocolate Cream

150g plain chocolate
150 ml crème fraîche
150 ml double cream

Cherry Wine Syrup

1 bottle Cherry Wine
100g Caster Sugar

Pre-heat the oven to 110°C. Heat a small pan on the hob and put in the Hazelnuts. Dry fry until they are toasted and nicely coloured. Allow to cool then chop finely.

Line 3 baking sheets with non-stick baking parchment. Mark a circle about 20 cm in diameter on each sheet. In a large bowl, whisk the egg whites into stiff peaks. Whisk in the sugar in three lots to form a thick glossy meringue. Fold in the Hazelnuts. Divide the meringue between the three baking sheets and spread to form three equal sized circles. Bake in the oven for two hours then turn it off and allow the meringues to cool inside.

Melt the chocolate in a bowl over a pan of just simmering water. Don't allow the bowl to touch the water or get too hot or the chocolate will split. Add the crème fraîche and whisk until the mixture is smooth and glossy. Remove from the heat and allow to cool a little. In another bowl, whisk the cream until it just thickens. Fold the cream into the chocolate mixture to form a soft cream.

Put one meringue disk on to a plate and spread on half the chocolate. Place a second disk on top then spread on the remaining chocolate and top with the third disk. Dust with icing sugar. Place in the fridge to set. Don't assemble the layers more than a couple of hours before serving.

To make the syrup, pour the cherry wine into a saucepan and reduce by two thirds. Add the caster sugar and simmer until the wine thickens slightly to form a syrup. Allow to cool before serving.

Serve slices of the meringue with some of the syrup and a dash of double cream if you wish.