

Chivas Regal Chocolate Cake

(based on Maida's Chocolate Bourbon Pound Cake in Nick Malgieri's *Bake!*)

- 140g (5oz) unsweetened chocolate, cut into small pieces or grated (for the first cake, I used Callebaut cocoa mass, and for the second one, I used Willie's Cacao)
- 360ml (1½ cups) hot brewed coffee (I used a strong plunger coffee)
- 120ml (½ cup) Chivas Regal (original recipe says to use best bourbon whiskey)
- 300g (2 cups) plain (AP) flour
- 440g (2 cups) white sugar
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), *sifted*
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 250g (1 cup) unsalted butter, really soft
- 3 medium (55g) free range eggs, at room temperature
- 10ml (2 teaspoons) vanilla extract (I used homemade)

1. Prepare tins - either line two loaf tins with parchment paper (mine were 21.5 x 11 x 7cm, or 8½ x 4½ x 2¼") *or* butter a 10 cup bundt pan, coat it with fine dry breadcrumbs and then spray over them with vegetable cooking spray. I didn't actually do this, but I will next time! Preheat the oven to 160c/320F or 150C/300F with fan.

2. Place the chocolate in a large bowl and pour over the hot coffee. Allow to rest for a minute or two, then whisk to combine. Stir the whisky into the mixture.

3. In the large bowl of an electric mixer, gently beat together the flour, sugar, sifted bicarb and salt, using the paddle attachment. Stop the mixer and add in the butter, which needs to be really soft. Mix on the lowest speed until the mixture comes together and all the butter is incorporated - the consistency at this point reminded me of choux pastry dough.

4. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat slowly to combine, before turning the speed up to medium and beating for a minute.

5. Scrape the bowl and beater down, and then pour in half the chocolate mixture. Mix very slowly to start (or you'll end up wearing it!) and then turn the speed up to medium and beat for a minute. Now add the remaining chocolate mixture, and again beat very slowly to start with, before turning the speed up to medium for a further two minutes. Resist the urge to drink all the batter at this point.

6. Pour the batter into the prepared tin(s) and bake for about 60 - 70 mins - a cake tester inserted into the middle of the cake should come out clean. My loaf tins only needed 60 minutes, but the bundt pan took slightly longer.

7. Let the cake rest in the tin for 15 minutes before crossing your fingers and attempting to unmould it. Allow to cool completely on a wire rack before slicing.

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