

Sticky Toffee & Pear Pudding

Suitable for Vegans and Vegetarians

Ingredients

- 8 small conference pears - firm
- 200g caster sugar
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 star anise
- 6 cloves
- Zest of 1 lemon in strips (vegetable peeler works well)
- Zest of 1 orange in strips
- Vegan ice cream, to serve (optional)
- 250g pitted dates
- 2 tbsp linseeds
- 300ml unsweetened almond milk
- 200ml vegetable oil, plus extra for greasing
- 175g dark muscovado sugar



- 200g self-raising flour
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tsp ground mixed spice

Method

Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Grease and line a springform 20 x 30cm baking tin with a strip of baking parchment.

For the pears

1. Peel the pears and cut the bottom off each to give a flat base. With a small knife to cut out the rest of the core. Roughly chop the pear scraps, discarding the pips, and set aside.
2. Tip the sugar, cinnamon, star anise, cloves, zest strips and 600ml water into a saucepan large enough to fit all the pears. Bring to the boil, then simmer until the sugar has dissolved.
3. Add the pears, cover with a lid and poach gently for 15 mins until a knife easily slides into a pear. Leave to cool in the liquid.

For the sponge

4. Put the dates and linseeds in a saucepan and add the almond milk. Bring to a gentle simmer, then cook for 2-3 mins until the dates are soft.

Sticky Toffee & Pear Pudding

Suitable for Vegans and Vegetarians

5. Pour into a food processor and blitz until smooth. Add the oil and blend again, then scrape into a bowl and set aside to cool a little.
6. Put the dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl with 1/2 tsp salt. Mix well, breaking up any lumps of sugar with your fingers.
7. Add the date and oil mixture and stir well.
8. Fold in the chopped pear scraps.
9. Scrape the cake mixture into the tin, then place the pears standing straight up, so that the bottom halves are covered. Preserve the poaching liquid.
10. Bake for 35-40 mins until the cake is cooked through. Insert a skewer to the centre to check – it should come out clean.
11. Meanwhile, bring the pear poaching liquid back to the boil and simmer until reduced to a glossy syrup. When the pudding is cooked, cool for 5-10 mins, then brush all over with the syrup, saving a little extra to serve alongside, with vegan ice cream.