BROWN'S HOTEL 185ᵀᴴ ANNIVERSARY RECIPE: CHOCOLATE BISCUIT CAKE

Chocolate Biscuit Cake – A History Of

Renowned as one of The Queen's favourite cakes, and a consistent childhood favourite in the royal nursery, the chocolate biscuit cake has been around for over a hundred years and is found in varying guises all over the world.

The 'biscuit' in the chocolate biscuit cake is approximately 400 years old. Made by McVitie's, the Rich Tea biscuit was invented in the 17th century for the upper classes as a light snack between meals. Baked for the first earl of Strafford by his chef Keryn Knight, the biscuit was brought to the wider British population by McVitie's.

Originally called Tea Biscuits, their precise date of origin is unknown however in 1891 the size of the Rich Tea biscuit was reduced to accommodate the smaller appetites of Londoners. This famous biscuit has remained largely unchanged ever since.

Chocolate biscuit cake - also known as fridge cake - enjoyed a surge of popularity in the 1970's and '80's, and was placed back into the limelight when Prince William chose to have it as the groom's cake at his wedding in 2011.

Extremely easy to make, this no-bake cake doesn't even require an oven, just a fridge.

The Recipe

Serves 8

225g Rich Tea biscuits
115g softened unsalted butter
115g unrefined caster sugar
115g chopped dark chocolate (minimum 53% cocoa solids)
2 tablespoons warm water

For the chocolate ganache
125g dark chocolate, chopped
125g whipping cream

Equipment
15cm metal cake ring

The Method

- Prepare the metal cake ring by greasing with butter and lining the sides and the bottom with baking paper. Place the lined ring onto a flat tray and leave to one side.
- Break the biscuits into walnut sized pieces, around 1-2cm in size. Do not place into a processor or use a rolling pin – the biscuits should not become crumbs.
- Place the softened butter and the sugar into a bowl and cream together until light and fluffy.
- Melt the chocolate either in the microwave or in a bain-marie over a simmering saucepan of water.
- Once melted, pour the chocolate on to the butter and sugar and mix thoroughly.
- Finally, add the water and then the broken biscuit pieces. Stir well to make sure that all the biscuit pieces are coated with the chocolate mix.
- Place the mixture into the lined cake ring and carefully but firmly push it down to create an even texture. Place the cake into the fridge to chill until the chocolate becomes firm. This could take 30 minutes or can be left overnight.

For the Chocolate Ganache

- To prepare the ganache for the cake covering, place the chopped chocolate into a bowl and pour the whipping cream into a saucepan.
- Bring the cream to a simmer and then pour over the chopped chocolate. Carefully stir until the chocolate has completely melted and the ganache is smoothly blended.

To Assemble

- Remove the chocolate biscuit cake from the fridge and from the cake ring.
- Place onto a wire rack with a tray beneath to collect the excess ganache.
- Carefully coat the chocolate biscuit cake with the warm ganache, making sure that all of the cake is evenly coated. Allow to set fully before moving to your service plate and decorating as desired.