

TASTE I



LUSCIOUS CHOCOLATE CAKE

From The Metropole Hotel & Spa in Llandrindod Wells

Ingredients

200g unsalted butter (plus extra for greasing)
200g dark chocolate (70% cocoa)
6 large free range eggs
1 tablespoon strong coffee
250g golden caster sugar
70g cocoa powder
Pinch sea salt
Icing sugar for dusting

Method

Preheat the oven to 160C/320F/Gas 3. Grease a 20cm springform cake tin with a little butter and line with greaseproof paper.

Rest a medium-sized, heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water on a medium low heat. Break in the chocolate, roughly chop and add the butter, then allow to melt, stirring occasionally until smooth and glossy.

Carefully remove the bowl from the heat, stir in the coffee and set aside to cool slightly. Separate the egg yolks and whites in two large bowls. Whisk the egg whites for one to two minutes or until soft peaks form.

Add the sugar to the yolks and beat for seven minutes, or until pale. Sift in the cocoa powder and a pinch of sea salt, then gently fold through and combine.

Stir in the melted chocolate mixture, then gently fold through the egg whites until smooth. Transfer to the prepared tin and place in the hot oven for around an hour, or until an inserted skewer comes out clean.

Allow to cool completely on a wire cooling rack, then serve with a dusting of icing sugar and, if you like, fresh berries and vanilla ice cream.

Melt your loved one's heart on St Dwynwen's Day

ON January 25, we'll be celebrating St. Dwynwen's Day – the patron saint of Welsh lovers.

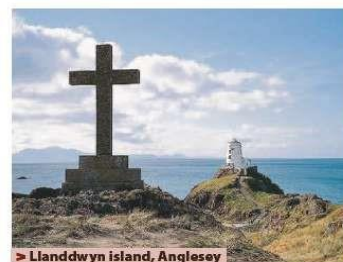
Her story, as legend has it, is far from a happy one. The prettiest of Brychan Brycheiniog's 24 daughters, she fell in love with a prince called Maelon Dafodrill. Unfortunately, her father had other ideas and had promised her to another man.

Dwynwen was so distressed she prayed to god to make her forget him and an angel appeared carrying a potion designed to erase her memories but, also, in the quirky manner of such stories, turn Maelon into a block of ice.

God also allowed her three wishes and her first, presumably proving the potion had failed, was to request that Maelon be defrosted, the second that god meet the hopes and dreams of all true lovers and the third that she should never have to marry.

All three were granted and Dwynwen founded a convent on the island of Llanddwyn on Anglesey, where it's claimed the remains can still be seen.

On a special day of celebration, we should all



➤ Llanddwyn island, Anglesey

enjoy a little indulgence. These puddings from top foodie establishments around Wales – Tyddyn Llan in Denbighshire, The Metropole Hotel & Spa in Llandrindod Wells and The Fox and Hounds in Llancafnan, Vale of Glamorgan – are perfect for that sweet treat.

PEACH MELBA

From Bryan Webb, chef/patron, Michelin-star Tyddyn Llan in Denbighshire

Ingredients

4 peaches, poached
Homemade or good quality vanilla ice cream
4 individual pavlovas or bought-in meringues
375 grams of fresh raspberries (3 small punnets)
100 grams of icing sugar
Juice of ½ lemon
75 grams of flaked almonds
Quarter pint of double cream

Method

Make the raspberry sauce by whizzing two punnets (250grams) of raspberries with the icing sugar and lemon juice in a blender, then pass the puree through a fine sieve into a bowl and chill.

Whip the cream to a soft peak. Toast the flaked almonds under a grill. Place a pavlova onto four plates, put two peach halves neatly inside, with scoop of ice cream on top.

Spoon some raspberry sauce around and garnish with the remaining raspberries. Top with a little whipped cream and some toasted flaked almonds.



WHITE CHOCOLATE PARFAIT

From Jim Dobson, head chef at The Fox & Hounds, Llancafnan, Vale of Glamorgan

Ingredients

100g white chocolate, broken into squares
250ml ready-made vanilla custard
142ml carton double cream

Method

Line a loaf tin with cling film. Put the

white chocolate in a medium-sized bowl over a pan of simmering water. When it has melted, gradually stir in the custard until it's smooth.

Leave the mixture to cool.

Whip the cream and fold it into the custard and chocolate mixture. Pour into the lined loaf tin and put it in the freezer overnight.

To serve, allow the frozen mixture to defrost a little. Turn out and serve with mango sorbet or the ice cream of your choice.