

Illusion cakes

The Birch Illusion Yule Log

8 SERVINGS · PREP. 1 hour 45 minutes · BAKE 10-12 MIN · REST 1 hour 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS & TOOLS

Sponge

- 4 medium eggs
- 100 g of sugar
- 80 g flour
- 20 g unsweetened cocoa
- 1 pinch of salt

Praline paste cream (250 g)

- 125 g of cold mascarpone
- 75 g of cold 35% whipping cream
- 50 g hazelnut praline paste

The bark and branch

- 500 g white fondant
- 20 g icing sugar for rolling out
- 5 g unsweetened cocoa for the bark markings
- 20 g green fondant for the mousse
- 4 small ready-made meringue mushrooms
- 10 g chocolate shavings
- Black and grey food colouring: tiny amounts, following the manufacturer's dosage

Baking tools

30 × 40 cm baking tray, baking paper, tea towel, scales, electric mixer, sieve, spatula, knife, rolling pin, food-safe brush and serving plate.

Allergens

Eggs, milk, gluten (wheat), hazelnuts; check the labels of praline paste, meringues, fondant and dyes.

LET'S GET BAKING!

01 / Bake the sponge

Preheat to 180 °C. Whisk the 4 whole eggs, sugar and salt for 7 to 8 min until the mixture leaves a ribbon. Gently fold in the sifted dry ingredients. Spread on a lined 30 × 40 cm tray; bake for 10 to 12 min without drying out the sponge.

02 / Roll and cool

Turn out the sponge and peel off the baking paper. While still warm, roll it up with clean baking paper, starting from a short side. Cool for 25 to 30 min before filling.

03 / Make the praline cream

In a cold bowl, whisk the 125 g mascarpone, 75 g cream and 50 g praline paste to soft peaks. Fill the cold sponge with the resulting 250 g cream. Roll without paper inside, seam underneath; refrigerate for at least 1 h.

04 / Shape the branch

Cut a thin slice from one end and keep it chilled. Quickly smooth the log with the back of a barely damp spoon; blot away any droplets.

05 / Create the white bark

Reserve 50 g white fondant for the branch. Roll the remaining 450 g to 2 to 3 mm, making a rectangle about 32 × 26 cm, adjusted to the cake. Cover the cold log, smooth and leave the spirals visible.

06 / Add the birch markings

With a barely damp brush, paint a few short, irregular black or grey marks. Dust lightly with cocoa: the bark should remain mostly white. Cover the reserved slice and rest it against the side of the log on the serving plate.

07 / Decorate the woodland scene

Crumble the green decoration around the base of the log. Add the four mushrooms and shavings at the last moment, as moisture softens meringues. Cut eight portions with a long knife.

Keep refrigerated. Keep the log in a box in the refrigerator, at 4 °C maximum, and consume it within 48 hours. Put the dry decorations at the last moment. Take it out 10 to 15 minutes before serving and put the leftovers back in the refrigerator.

FULL RECIPE + VIDEO ↗