

More than 1 hour

Serves 4-6

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Ingredients:

Poached pears

- 1 bottle (750ml) Drostdy-Hof Adelpracht
- 1 cup (200g) castor sugar
- 2 sticks cinnamon
- 5 star anise
- 3 whole pears, peeled (keeping stem intact)

Cake

- 2 cups (300g) flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (150g) brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (40g) cocoa powder + extra for dusting
- 1 tsp (5ml) baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp (3ml) bicarbonate of soda
- Pinch salt
- 1 egg, whisked
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups (375ml) buttermilk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60g) melted butter, cooled
- 1 slab (100g) dark chocolate, chopped (optional)
- A handful edible flowers, for serving (optional)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 170°C.
2. Combine wine, castor sugar, cinnamon and star anise in a medium pot.
3. Add pears (making sure they are covered in poaching liquid) and bring to a boil.
4. Simmer for 5-7 minutes and cool.
5. Combine flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder, bicarb and salt.
6. Whisk together egg, buttermilk and butter.

7. Add buttermilk mixture to dry ingredients and mix well.
8. Fold through dark chocolate, if using.
9. Pour batter into a greased and lined 20cm x 10cm loaf tin.
10. Remove pears from liquid and pat dry.
11. Dust with cocoa and nestle pears upright into batter (cover the stems with foil).
12. Bake for 50-55 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.
13. Remove from oven and cool completely in tin.
14. Garnish with edible flowers, if using.
15. Serve thick slices of cake drizzled with reduced poaching liquid.