Chocolate beetroot cakes

This is a great way to use some of that beetroot glut! It's such an easy recipe, with no melting of chocolate or beating, and something lovely to make for vegans – the egg replacer seems to work as well if not better than eggs. (Buy Orgran egg replacer in a packet from a health food shop).

Adding beetroot to a chocolate cake recipe makes it wonderfully fudgy and moist. If you make them as little cakes you will find yourself giving them away to all your friends, but the same recipe works as a large cake too – just cook for longer.

Ingredients

- 75g/2½oz cocoa powder
- 180g/6½oz plain flour, or plain/wholemeal mix
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 250g/8½oz sugar, caster or golden granulated
- 250g/8½oz beetroot
- 3 large eggs, or equivalent teaspoons of egg replacer
- 200ml/7fl oz sunflower or other vegetable oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- icing sugar for dusting

Method

1. Scrub the beetroot and cut into big chunks without peeling, then pack into a saucepan big enough to take them all snugly. Cover with the minimum water and boil until tender (about 20 minutes). Drain off the gorgeous dark red liquid and reserve it. Slip the skins off the beetroot chunks.
2. Preheat the oven to 180C/355F/Gas 4. Arrange paper muffin cases in a 12-mould muffin tin, or 24 bun cases in 2 bun tins.
3. Sift the cocoa powder, flour and baking powder into a bowl, tipping the bran in too if you use any wholemeal flour. Mix in the sugar, and set aside.
4. Purée the beetroot with its cooking liquid in a food processor to a fine mush. Add the eggs, one at a time, or the egg-replacer whisked into its water, then add the vanilla and oil and blend until smooth.
5. Make a well in the centre of the dry ingredients, add the beetroot mixture and lightly mix. Pour into the muffin cases.
6. Bake for 15 minutes (buns) or 30 minutes (muffins) or until the top is firm when pressed with a finger.
7. Cool on a wire rack and dust with icing sugar to serve.