

## **Butternut Squash, Brown Sugar and Pecan Cake with Cream Cheese Icing**

400g Butternut Squash, peeled, deseeded and coarsely grated (to give about 300g flesh)

350g self-raising flour

275g soft light brown sugar

1 large eating apple, peeled, cored and coarsely grated

2 tsp ground mixed spice

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp baking powder

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

6 eggs

250ml vegetable oil

Finely grated zest of 2 oranges

1 tsp vanilla extract

### **Cream Cheese Icing**

300g low-fat cream cheese

3 tbsp icing sugar, sifted

Seeds of 1 vanilla pod

### **To Decorate**

12 pecan nut halves

Preheat the oven to 190°C, (fan 170°C), 375°F, Gas Mark 5.

Lightly grease the bottom of two 20cm sandwich tins, line with baking parchment and set on a baking tray.

Put the butternut squash, flour, sugar, apple, spices, baking powder and bicarb in a large bowl. Give them a quick toss together and then make a hole in the centre. Lightly beat the eggs in a medium bowl and then stir in the oil, orange zest and vanilla extract until combined. Pour the wet mixture into the dry ingredients and mix everything together until well combined.

Divide the mixture evenly between the two cake tins and place in the oven to bake for 40-45 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the icing by simply mixing the cream cheese, icing sugar and vanilla seeds together until smooth. Cover and chill in the fridge until ready to use.

Once cakes are cooked, remove from the oven and leave to cool.

Once cool, spread half of the cream cheese icing on top of this sponge. Place the other sponge on top and then spread the remaining icing over evenly.

Arrange the pecans all around the top outside edge of the sponge to decorate.