

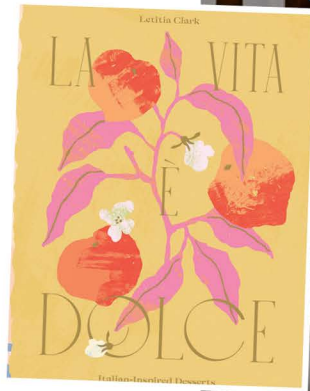
# Try Letitia Clark's very fancy fridge cake

"I used to always request chocolate biscuit cake (also known as fridge cake) as my birthday cake, which was a blow to my mum because she had a special talent for inventive cake decoration, and chocolate biscuit cake is almost impossible to decorate," says food writer Letitia Clark.

"Nevertheless, this combination of broken biscuits, chocolate and butter was my favourite cake as a child; strange on many counts, as generally I've never been a lover of chocolate, and it isn't really a cake.

"Anyway, I loved it, and I still love it. I also love this cake - its Italian cousin, which has the added bonus of being shaped like a salame."

■ La Vita è Dolce by Letitia Clark is published by Hardie Grant, priced £26.



Letitia Clark

## CHOCOLATE, HAZELNUT AND SOUR CHERRY SALAME

### INGREDIENTS

(Makes one, almost obscenely large salame, or two modest ones)

80g hazelnuts

200g biscuits (Rich Tea or another simple, dry, not-too-sweet biscuit)

250g dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa solids)

150g butter (at room temperature)

120 caster (superfine) sugar

Pinch of salt

2 eggs, beaten

1tbsp cocoa (unsweetened chocolate) powder

80g dried cherries (you can substitute cranberries or any other fruit)

Icing (confectioner's) sugar, for dusting

### METHOD

**1** Preheat the oven to 170°C (340°F/Gas 13). Lay the hazelnuts over the base of a baking sheet. Toast them in the oven for 10 minutes or so until lightly golden. Remove and set aside to cool, then roughly chop (or crush them briefly with the bottom of a rolling pin).

**2** Break up the biscuits by putting them in a bag and bashing them

Chocolate salame from La Vita è Dolce by Letitia Clark



with a rolling pin or by blitzing them quickly in a food processor. It is important they stay in fairly large pieces - you're not aiming for crumbs.

**3** Melt the chocolate in a small heatproof bowl set over a pan of gently simmering water (or in a microwave). Allow it to cool for a few minutes.

**4** Beat the butter, sugar and salt in a mixing bowl using an electric mixer until smooth and creamy. Whisk in the beaten eggs, a little at a time, to form a smooth batter. Add the cocoa powder and the cooled, melted chocolate. Add the broken biscuits and the dried cherries and stir well to combine. Add the hazelnuts and stir again.

**5** Scoop the mixture out (it will look quite sticky at this stage) onto a rectangle of clingfilm, aiming for a sort of long oblong shape. Place another piece of clingfilm the same size over the top and wrap the sausage completely. Roll it in your hands to smooth out the shape and then twist the ends. Put in the fridge.

**6** Once solid and firm, unseal your sausage and dust in icing sugar, and either wrap it in baking parchment if giving it as a gift or, if you want to go the whole hog, tie it up as you would a proper salami. There are YouTube videos about how to tie salami properly. Will keep for up to one week, covered, in the fridge.

*Note: If you want to make this super fancy, you can use Amaretti, Digestives or Hob Nobs.*