

ROASTED BROCCOLI, CHILI AND RICOTTA CAKE

400g broccoli, florets & stems cut into 2-3cm pieces
150ml extra virgin olive oil
1tsp sea salt flakes
Freshly ground black pepper
3 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 red chilis, thinly sliced
1 small onion, peeled & grated
Zest of 1 lemon
5 eggs, lightly beaten
50g parmesan (plus 1TBSP extra for sprinkling), finely grated
250g ricotta
150g self raising flour
2tsp salt flakes & some freshly ground pepper

Pre-heat oven to 220C (200C fan-forced). Line the base of a 20cm round springform cake tin with baking paper.

Bring a large pot of water to the boil, and blanch the broccoli for 1 minute. Drain the broccoli, and transfer to a large bowl. Toss with 50ml of the extra virgin olive oil, 1tsp of salt flakes and a few turns of the pepper mill. Transfer to a large oven tray, place in the oven, and roast for 10 minutes. Set aside to cool. Reduce the oven to 200C (180C fan-forced).

While the broccoli is roasting, pour the remaining olive oil (about 100ml) into a small saucepan, add the garlic and half of the sliced chilis, then place over low heat to infuse. When the garlic just begins to colour (about 10 minutes), remove from the heat and set aside to cool to room temperature. Don't allow the garlic to get too brown before removing from the heat as it will continue to cook.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the roasted broccoli, grated onion and lemon zest. Add the eggs, the cooled infused olive oil and the grated parmesan, then crumble over the ricotta and season with the extra sea salt and pepper. Add the flour, and fold gently until just combined.

Scrape the mixture into the prepared cake tin and use a small spatula to smooth the surface. Sprinkle over the extra parmesan and the remaining sliced chilis. Place into the oven for 35 minutes, until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Allow to cool for 15 minutes before releasing from the cake tin onto a serving plate. The cake is best served warm or at room temperature.

NOTE: For muffins, exactly the same recipe and procedure can be followed up to the final paragraph. Once mixture is ready, spoon the mixture into a muffin tin for 6 large or 12 small muffins, then sprinkle the extra parmesan and chilis on top. For the large muffins, bake for 35 minutes as above; for small muffins, bake for 25-28 minutes.

SERVES 6