

# Recipes from Nuts 'n May

## Nut Clusters

These are a family favourite, it's a good assembly-line job for kids in the kitchen for small fingers. If a few go missing along the way (the clusters, not the fingers), who is going to complain? These make ideal Easter or Christmas gifts.



You can vary the icing and choose not to dip them in chocolate if you prefer. It's also advisable to remember that these are meant to be able to be popped into the mouth to be eaten as one or two bites at most, so keep them small.

The icing recipe is also the basic butter icing we use on coffee cakes, simply substitute the coffee with brandy or cocoa powder to change the flavour.

## Ingredients

For the clusters:

96 Walnut halves  
48 Dried apricots  
2 blocks Dark cooking chocolate

For the icing:

1 cup Icing sugar  
1 ½ tsp Soft unsalted butter  
1 shot Espresso coffee

## Method

Make the icing by sifting the icing sugar into a bowl or mixer, combine with the butter, and then drizzle in enough of the liquid coffee until the icing starts to form a stiff consistency. If you use too much liquid, add in some more icing sugar. The icing should be mouldable, but not too dry - but definitely not thin or runny.

You can make a basic cluster by kissing two walnut halves together with a small dab of icing. Or go the full hog with two walnut halves kissed together with a dried apricot in the middle (as shown at the top of the page).

Leave the clusters to set for a few minutes before starting to dip them in chocolate.

In a double boiler (or a bowl over boiling water) break up the king-sized blocks of chocolate and allow to gently melt. Don't let the boiling water touch the bottom of the chocolate bowl. Add in a little coffee and then to temper the melted chocolate by beating it till it is smooth and glossy. Drop in the clusters a few at a time and coat them evenly with the chocolate (use a couple of forks to save burning your fingers).

Remove and set out on a sheet of baking paper to cool.

If need be, place in the fridge or freezer to help them set quicker.

This makes 48 clusters. Halve the recipe if you only want 24 clusters, but they keep well in an airtight container in the fridge for several months.

