

Christmas Cake

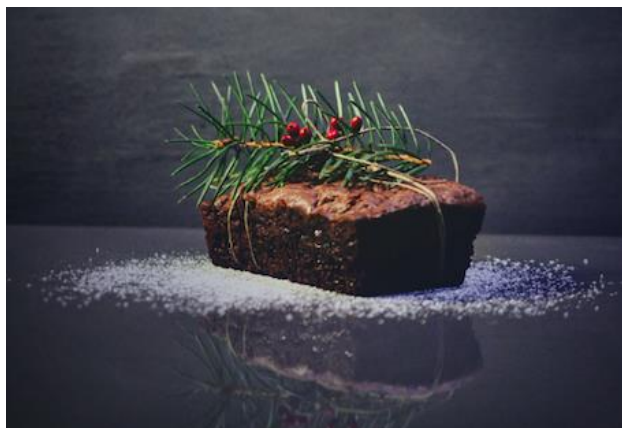


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This is a recipe that has never failed me. I use it whenever I need a celebration fruit cake and substitute the brandy for brewed black tea.

The combination of fruits contribute a wonderful complexity, while the fresh orange and lemon zest and marmalade give a little lift to the flavour. Cherries, peel and almonds make it a Christmas cake.

This cake is nice to eat the day after it is made, but will mellow in flavour and texture if stored for 3 weeks. This recipe makes a small cake but can easily be doubled.



Ingredients

200g seeded raisins

200g seedless raisins

200g sultanas

200g currants

75g glacé cherries

50g glacé peel

50g blanched almonds

50g marmalade

2 tsp finely grated orange zest

2 tsp finely grated lemon zest

1/4 cup brandy (or cooled brewed Stir Tea - [English Breakfast](#) or [Assam](#))

200g soft butter

200g soft brown sugar

1 Tbsp treacle

4 eggs

250g standard flour

1/4 tsp baking powder

pinch of each ground cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, ginger and mace

Method

Spread the raisins, sultanas, currants out on a baking tray and pick through to find any stray stalks. Chop the seeded raisins. Chop the cherries and glaze peel and sliver the almonds. Place all the fruits and nuts in a bowl, add the marmalade, grated zests and brandy (or brewed and cooled Stir Tea) and mix thoroughly. This may be done up to a few days ahead of time.

Pre-heat oven to 160 degrees C and line a deep 20cm cake tin with baking paper. Cream the butter and brown sugar until soft and fluffy, then beat in the treacle. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, adding a little of the measured flour if the mixture starts to curdle. Sift the remaining flour, baking powder and spices and beat in. Mix in the fruit and nut mixture. Pile into prepared tin and smooth the top.

Bake at 160C (not on fan bake) for 90 minutes, then reduce the heat to 150C and bake for another 30-45 mins until a skewer poked in the middle comes out clean. Remove the cake from the oven and cool in the tin before turning out.

This recipe is from a NZ Listener book called 'A Good Year' written by Lois Daish.