

SIMNEL CAKE

Ingredients

For the cake

- 175g light brown sugar
- 175g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
- 175g self-raising flour
- 3 large free-range eggs
- 50g ground almonds
- 3 tbsp milk
- 100g sultanas
- 100g glacé cherries, quartered and washed free of sugar
- 100g dried apricots, cut into small pieces
- 2 tsp mixed spice powder

For the topping

- 450g golden marzipan
- 3 tbsp apricot jam
- 1 free-range egg, beaten

Method

Preheat the oven to 130C Fan. Grease a 20cm/8in round, deep-sided, loose-bottomed tin with butter and line the base with baking paper.

Weigh a large mixing bowl and note its weight. Put the cake ingredients into the large mixing bowl and beat together until well incorporated. Weigh the bowl and its contents. Spoon half the mixture into the prepared tin and level the surface.

Roll one-third of the marzipan to the same size as the base of the tin and place on top of the cake mixture.

Spoon the remaining cake mixture on top of the marzipan and level the surface. Bake for 1¾-2 hours or until golden-brown on top and firm in the middle. If the cake is beginning to brown but is not cooked through cover it with tin foil. Leave the cake to cool for 10 minutes before removing from the tin. Place on a cooling rack.

Heat the apricot jam in a pan, then brush the top of the cooled cake with a little warm jam. Roll out half of the remaining marzipan to fit the top of the cake. Place the marzipan on the cake and use your thumb to crimp around the edges.

Make 11 balls from the remaining marzipan and place these around the edge of the cake fixing them to the marzipan with a little beaten egg.

Brush the marzipan with the beaten egg and glaze under a hot grill, watching it carefully and turning the cake round to ensure even browning.