

Janine's Simnel Cake

1 Lemon (rind grated & Juice)
1 Orange (rind grated & Juice)
50 ml Orange juice
10oz (285g) Sultanas
6oz (175g) Currants
6oz (175g) Soft Dark Brown Sugar
6oz (175g) Margarine
8oz (225g) Self Raising Flour
3 medium eggs
1 tsp Cinnamon
1tsp Nutmeg
½ tsp Ginger
750g Marzipan
2 dessert spoons of apricot jam
1 extra egg separated
Icing Sugar for dusting



Method

12/24 hrs in advance grate and squeeze the lemon & orange, put fruit in bowl with grated zest, juice of lemon and orange plus the additional orange juice and soak overnight.

When ready to make the cake beat the margarine & sugar together until light creamy. Add eggs & flour mixed with the spices, a little at a time. Fold in the fruit with all the juices and mix well.

Roll out 250g of the marzipan, to approximately 5mm in thickness (about the thickness of a pencil is a good guide), as you roll smooth it into a circle shape with your hands, this needs to be just a fraction smaller than the 7" round cake tin. (Alternatively you can cut around the loose bottom of the tin). You can use either flour or icing sugar to stop it sticking to the surface while rolling.

Line a 7" round deep cake tin with greaseproof or silicone liner, put half of the cake batter into the tin, place the marzipan on the top pushing it down lightly so that there are no air bubbles, then add rest of mixture on top of the layer of marzipan. This will fill the cake tin nearly to the top but with it being a fruit cake it won't rise much so don't worry about this.

Pre-heat the oven to 150c and bake in the centre for 2½ - 2¾ hours. It is best to protect the outer edge of the cake during baking (although not essential) by putting brown paper, grease proof or silicone lining strip around the outside of the pan, this can be tied with HEAT RESISTANT string. Check the cake after 2 hours and if it looks like it is browning too much on the top cover with greaseproof paper. Once finished baking place on a cooling tray and leave to cool completely (preferably overnight) before taking out of the baking tin. You may need to run a knife around the edge to loosen.

Roll out 300g of the marzipan, again to approximately 5mm thickness, this time use icing sugar to dust the surface before rolling and cut around the loose bottom of the pan to get a neat round that fits precise on the top of your cake. Heat the apricot jam in the microwave for no more than 20/30 seconds brush the top of the cake and stick the marzipan in place. You can score the top of the cake if you wish. Take the remaining marzipan and split into 11 equal pieces and make 11 small round balls, these represent all Jesus's faithful disciples (Judas is left off), if you want or if you have marzipan left you can make a slightly bigger ball for the centre to represent Jesus. Whisk the egg white lightly with a fork, brush the top of the marzipan sparingly with the egg white and stick the balls in place. You can tie a nice Easter themed ribbon around the centre for effect.

Place under the grill on a low shelf and watch like a hawk – it will suddenly turn a golden brown (or black if you're not watching it)!

This can either be eaten fresh or will keep for up to a couple of months in an airtight container.