

## Christmas Cake!

Course: Snack

Servings: 6

Author: Grace

### Ingredients

- 175 g plain flour
- 1/2 tsp ground mixed spice
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 150 g butter or dairy free spread
- 150 g soft brown sugar
- grated rind of 1 lemon
- 1 tbs black treacle
- 3 large eggs
- 40 g ground almonds
- 500 g dried mixed fruit
- 50 g glace cherries
- 50 g blanched almonds, roughly chopped (optional)
- 1 tbs brandy (optional)

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.
2. Grease and double line six mini baked bean tins with greaseproof paper. (After a bit of trial and error, I found the quickest way to do this was to cut a long strip of paper, roll it up, make cuts at one end and pop it cuts-side down into the tin, unrolling it once in the tin to fit around the edges.)
3. Use the tin as a template to cut out 2 circles of greaseproof paper and add them to the bottom of the tin, then trim down the paper to stand about 2cm above the edge of the tin.
4. Stand the lined tins on a small baking tray or roasting tin.
5. Sift the flour and spices into a bowl and stir to combine.
6. In a separate large mixing bowl, whisk the butter, sugar and lemon rind together until light and fluffy. Add the treacle and whisk again until combined.
7. Whisk in the eggs one at a time, adding a table spoon of flour with each one and whisking before adding the next.
8. Fold in the remaining flour, ground almonds, dried fruit, glace cherries and almonds and stir to completely combine.
9. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tins.
10. Place in the oven and bake for 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, turn the temperature down to 140°C/275°F/Gas Mark 1 and bake for another hour.
11. Check with a skewer to see if they are ready – the skewer should come out clean when stuck down in the centre of one of the cakes. Mine were ready at this stage, but if not, bake for another 10 minutes or so until done.
12. Remove the cakes from the oven and leave to cool in the tins for about half an hour. Once cool enough to handle, carefully coax the cakes from the tins then place on a wire rack to cool completely.
13. Once cool, remove the greaseproof paper. (If storing for more than a few days, wrap the cakes up in fresh paper and drizzle a little brandy over each cake to help preserve it, then double wrap in tin foil and store somewhere cool and dry for up to 2 to 3 months until ready to use. The longer you store them the more the flavours will develop, but if you are really pushed for time these cakes are delicious even when fresh.)
14. Once completely cool and ready to decorate, slice off the tops to level, cover the cakes with marzipan and decorate with traditional royal icing or with fondant – whichever you prefer.