

Kevin Woodford's Simnel Cake

175g unsalted softened butter
175g light brown sugar
3 tbsps milk
3 large eggs
175g self raising flour
25g ground almonds
100g glace cherries
100g sultanas
100g stem ginger
100g dried apricots
½ tspn grated nutmeg
1 tspn ground ginger
2 tspn mixed spice
500g almond paste
4 tbsps apricot jam, heated
1 medium egg, beaten

Grease and line the sides and bottom of a 20cm-deep round cake tin with baking paper. Chop the cherries, ginger and apricots into small pieces and place into a large bowl with all of the other ingredients with the exception of the almond paste, apricot jam and medium egg. Beat until the mixture is well blended and place half the cake mix into a 20cm deep round cake tin that has been lined with greased baking paper.

Roll out one third of the almond paste into a round the same size as the cake tin and place on top of the mixture. Place the remaining cake mix on top and smooth the surface.

Cook in a preheated oven set at gas mark 3 / 160C / 320F for between 90 minutes to 2 hours until golden brown. It's often advisable to cover the top of the cake with baking foil for the last 10 minutes to prevent it gaining too much colour.

Leave to cool and then carefully turn out onto a wire rack and allow to cool.

Roll out the remainder of the almond paste to fit the top of the cake. Brush the surface of the cake with a little of the heated apricot jam and place this on top of the cake. Using a fork, crimp the edges of the cake and pattern the centre of the cake to your own design. Brush the surface of the almond paste with the beaten egg and glaze under a hot grill until golden brown.