

Christmas Cake

By Kirsty Wark

BBC
RADIO



Ingredients

1kg mixed fruit & peel (currants, raisins, sultanas)
2-3 tablespoons of brandy or orange/pineapple/apple juice
185g plain flour
40g ground almonds
Salt (a generous pinch)
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon mixed spice
225g unsalted butter
225g soft brown sugar
4 eggs (room temperature)
50g chopped almonds (dry toasted)
1 dessert spoon treacle
Zest of a lemon
Zest of an orange

20p piece in foil ready to add later (optional)



OTHER ESSENTIALS:

Baking tin (7inch) with removable base.

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Method

1. Soak mixed fruit & peel in brandy (or juice) the night before to plump the fruit.
2. Put softened butter and soft brown sugar into a mixer and mix until it is creamy and pale.
3. Crack 4 eggs in to a bowl and add salt. Slowly add to the butter and sugar mix.
4. Add a dessert spoon of treacle to the mixture and mix in.
5. While it is mixing toast 50g of almonds in a frying pan.
6. Grate nutmeg and add it and the mixed spice to fruit mix.
7. Measure out flour and almonds and add to the mixture already in the mixer.
8. Take the mixture from the mixer (mixed butter/sugar/treacle/eggs/ground almonds/flour/salt), add to the fruit mix and thoroughly stir.
9. Add the toasted almonds.
10. Line the baking tin with two layers of greaseproof paper. (Double line the base and single line the sides)
11. Grate the zest of a whole lemon and whole orange and add to mixture.
12. Add 20p wrapped in foil, stir... and make a wish!
13. Add mixture to baking tin. Press down well to ensure there are no gaps. (Add blanched almonds to the top of the cake at this stage if you do not intend to ice the cake).
14. Slightly indent the middle of the cake to ensure it is flat when it is cooked.
15. Set the oven to Gas Mark 2/3 or 150/160°C and leave to cook for around 4/5 hours.

“FEEDING” THE CAKE:

Once the cake is cooked remember to feed it with either 1 tablespoon of brandy or orange juice about four times between when it is baked and eaten.

1. Using a knitting needle or sharp object, make a few holes in the cake and evenly scatter the brandy/orange juice over the top ensuring it filters through to the holes in to the rest of the cake.
2. Make new holes each time you feed the cake – these won’t be seen when you decorate it