

YEASTED SIMNEL CAKE

Simnel cakes were traditionally made for Mothering Sunday when people visited their mother church, now associated with Easter and Mothers' Day. This is a Victorian version of an older recipe.

The marzipan:

*360g ground almonds
240g caster sugar - blitzed briefly in a blender
120g of beaten egg ie about 2 large eggs
2 tsp lemon juice plus zest of one lemon*

Mix the **ground almonds, sugar, egg & lemon juice and zest** to a stiff paste and set aside.

The cake:

*15g fresh yeast (7g dried)
200g milk scalded and cooled
200g plain white flour
250g strong white flour*

*20g butter at room temperature
60g soft brown sugar
3 eggs, beaten*

*½ tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground ginger
½ tsp nutmeg
1 tsp salt
225g sultanas (soaked in sherry, rum or apple juice)
60g mixed peel
2 tablespoons chopped preserved ginger.
1 tbs of apricot jam melted in water on the hob*

Method

Soak the sultanas **the evening before** then drain before use. Dissolve the yeast in the warm milk. Add the yeast liquid to the flour and mix to form a dough then knead it for around 10 minutes. Leave it covered in a warm place for 1 hour.

Beat the butter and sugar together, then add the eggs one at a time. Now knead this into the dough, lastly adding the peel, spices and sultanas. Give it another knead to distribute these last ingredients. Leave covered in a warm place for another hour.

Lay half the dough in a greased 18cm round deep tin. Form the marzipan into an 18cm circle and place it on top. Spread the remaining cake mixture on top of the marzipan. Bake at 220°C (fan oven) for 30 minutes. You may need to protect the top to prevent sultanas from burning.

Once out of the oven, brush the top with the apricot jam glaze. Leave to cool for 15 minutes or so before removing from the tin.

