

Mary Berry's American Light Christmas Cake

(Adapted from the version posted on the BBC website many years ago)

350g(12 oz) glace cherries
1*200g(7oz) can of pineapple in natural juice
350g(12oz) no-soak dried apricots
100g(4oz) whole almonds
Finely grated rind of **two** un-waxed lemons
350g(12oz) sultanas
250g(9oz) self raising flour
250g(9oz) caster sugar
250g(9oz) soft baking margarine
75g(3oz) ground almonds
5 eggs

To decorate: put aside at start-
Whole almonds (small handful)
Glace cherries (say 12 halves)

To finish:
100g(4oz) icing sugar, sifted. (optional)

To start:
Pour a glass of sherry for the Cook.
Turn on soothing music.
No need to stand if weary, just sit at table for preparation.

Method:

Set Oven to 170 C to pre-heat.

1. The above makes quite a lot of cake mix! Grease a 23 cm (9in) DEEP round cake tin and line base and sides with greased greaseproof paper. We usually make two smaller cakes from above quantities so that we can eat one and store one for next time we get the yearn! Freezes beautifully and may taste even nicer after freezing.
2. Cut cherries into quarters. This can be fiddly so I just get the scissors and chomp them any which way to get bits. Only neat ones are for decoration as above. Rinse and drain well (or do not bother!).

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3. Drain and roughly chop the pineapple. (Juice is nice to drink and if you like Vodka then add a shot with some ice and lemon juice and enjoy!)
4. Dry the pineapple (and if you have washed the cherries) with paper towel or clean dishtowel.
5. Snip apricots into pieces with scissors.
6. Blanche almonds on hot water and remove skins and roughly chop. (Or cheat by getting pre-shelled ones already chopped up a bit).
7. Put sultanas and chopped up fruit and nuts into a large mixing bowl.
8. Add grated lemon rind.
9. Put your right leg in and shake it all about.
10. Time for another sherry?
11. Add remaining ingredients
 - a. Eggs
 - b. Flour
 - c. Caster sugar
 - d. Margarine
 - e. Ground almonds
12. Beat well to mix thoroughly for a few minutes to get a nice well mixed paste.
13. Decant into Baking Tin.

To Bake.

One hour at 170 C (makes it nice and brown on top) (set the timer)
Then 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours at 150 C Set the timer for last two hours and check with testing pin if you like so that it does not get too dry! You are a perfectionist after all!

Another sherry to fortify you for big clean-up!

All done cleaning?

You need a final sherry then a snooze in front of the tele, keeping one ear alert for the timer!

This cake can be enjoyed at all times of the year!

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