PREP: 30 min
COOK: 60-90 min
SERVES: 16-20

Snow Scene Christmas Layer Cake

This rich almond and vanilla brandy fruit cake is loaded with spice-soaked fruits and layered with homemade marzipan. A truly beautiful Christmas treat to share with your loved ones!

Ingredients

Cake

¾ cup (120g) raisins
¾ cup (120g) sultanas
½ cup (75g) glacé cherries
cup + 1 tbsp (65g) dried apricots
cup + 1 tbsp (65g) dried cranberries
2 tsp Queen Madagascan Vanilla Bean Paste
2 tsp Queen Natural Almond Extract
2 tsp Queen Natural Lemon Extract
2 tsp mixed spice
75ml brandy
215g butter

Method - Cake

STEP 1

In a mixing bowl, mix together all dried fruits and Vanilla Bean Paste, Almond Extract and Lemon Extract along with 45ml (3 tbsp) brandy and mixed spice. Mix well and set aside.

STEP 2

Preheat oven to 150°C (fan forced). Cut an 18cm circle of brown paper and place in the bottom of a deep 18cm round tin. Lay 2 circles of baking paper on top. Grease the sides and line with two layers of baking paper. Wrap outside of tin with double band of brown paper and secure with bakers twine. Set aside.

STEP 3

In a large mixing bowl, beat butter with the sugar and golden syrup until blended and creamy in texture. Gradually whisk in eggs and stir in almond meal. Sift flour and Baking Powder on top. Carefully mix together until thoroughly combined.

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Ingredients

1 cup (160g) brown sugar

¼ cup (60ml/90g) golden syrup

4 large eggs, lightly whisked

1 cup (100g) almond meal

1 ½ cups (225g) plain flour

2 ½ tsp baking powder

Marizpan

1 ¾ cups +1 tbsp (285g) icing sugar

¾ cups + 2 tsp (175g) caster sugar

4 ½ cups (450g) almond meal

1 tsp Queen Madagascan Vanilla Bean Paste

1 tsp Queen Natural Almond Extract

2 large eggs

½ tsp orange juice (or lemon juice)

Decorate

600g Dr. Oetker Ready to Roll Icing White

6 tbsp apricot jam (smooth and softened)

Method - Cake

STEP 4

Add fruit and all liquid from bowl and mix together well, then spoon into the cake tin, smoothing the top. Make an indent in the centre to help achieve a flat rise. Bake for about 1.5-2 hours until rich brown and firm to the touch – a skewer inserted into the center will come out clean when cake is cooked.

STEP 5

Put the cake tin on wire rack and remove brown paper collar. Skewer cake about 12 times all over the top and carefully spoon over 30ml (2 tbsp) brandy. Leave cake to cool completely before removing from the tin.

STEP 6

Discard all the wrappings from the sides and base of the cake, and wrap well in fresh baking paper followed by a layer of foil. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks before decorating.

Method - Marzipan

STEP 1

Prepare marzipan up to 2 days in advance. Mix the sugars and almond meal in a large bowl, then add Vanilla Bean Paste and Almond Extract. Make a well in the middle, then add eggs and juice. Cut wet ingredients into the dry with a butter knife. Dust bench with icing sugar, then knead marzipan briefly to a smooth dough. Don't overdo it as the paste can get greasy. Add a bit more icing sugar if it seems too wet. Shape into a ball, then wrap and keep in a cool place until ready to assemble.

Method - Assembly

STEP 1

A couple of days before serving, knead 75g Ready to Roll Icing to soften. Keep remaining icing tightly wrapped in order to prevent it from drying out. Lightly dust bench with icing sugar and roll out Icing. Using assorted sized star and snowflake cutters, stamp out 30 different shapes and place on a tray lined with baking paper. Cover loosely with baking paper allow to dry for 24 hours.

STEP 2

When ready to serve, unwrap cake and discard all wrappings. Using a large serrated knife, carefully cut cake into 3 equal layers.

STEP 3

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Method - Assembly

Gently knead the Marzipan to soften then divide into 3 equal pieces. Lightly dust bench with icing sugar, roll each piece out to form an 18cm round - use the cake tin base as a guide. Brush one side of each portion of cake with apricot jam and lay a circle of marzipan on top of each. Stack cake slices, pushing down gently to secure, neaten the edges as necessary, and then transfer to a serving plate.

STEP 4

Gently knead the remaining Ready to Roll Icing to soften, then roll out thickly to form a circle to fit top of the cake. Transfer to cake top and use finger tips dusted with icing sugar to smooth and neaten edges and top. Arrange stars and snowflakes on top and decorate with Chocolate Silver Pearls.

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