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RECIPE SERVICE

Image number: 12241261

Recipe number: R1165070

Naked cake on a marble background

(For 18 servings, approx. or for 1 cake)

Prep and cook time: 1 h 25 min

chilling time: 30 min

Difficulty: medium

Cannot be frozen

Ingredients:

For the cakes:

300 g | 2 1/3 cups plain flour

3/4 tsp ground nutmeg

3/4 tsp ground ginger

3/4 tsp ground cardamom

1/2 tsp salt

3/4 tsp bicarbonate of soda

85 ml water

180 g | 3/4 cup vegetable shortening, at room temperature

375 g | 1 1/2 cup caster sugar

2 small eggs

225 g | 3/4 cup treacle

180 ml buttermilk

For the buttercream:

375 g | 1 1/2 cups butter, softened

550 g | 4 1/2 cups icing sugar, sifted

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 pinch ground cinnamon

1 pinch ground nutmeg

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2 tbsp brandy, optional
white food colouring paste, optional

To decorate: pine sprigs, optional

Method:

- 1 For the cakes: Preheat the oven to 180°C (160° fan) | 350F | gas 4. Grease and line two 20 cm | 8" springform cake tins with greaseproof paper.
- 2 Stir together the flours, spices, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in a small bowl of the water.
- 3 Cream together the shortening and sugar in a large mixing bowl until pale and smooth, about 4 minutes.
- 4 Beat in the eggs and then gradually beat in the treacle; you may need to gently warm it first.
- 5 Fold in the dry ingredients in three additions, alternating with the buttermilk, until the batter is smooth and thick. To finish, stir in the bicarbonate of soda and water mixture.
- 6 Divide between the cake tins and bake until risen and firm to the touch with a slight spring, about 30-40 minutes; a toothpick should come out clean from their centres when ready.
- 7 Remove the tins from the oven to wire racks to cool. Once cool, turn out and trim their tops flat with a serrated bread knife, if needed.
- 8 For the buttercream: Beat the butter in a large mixing bowl until creamy, about 2-3 minutes. Gradually stir in the icing sugar before beating until a thick and even buttercream forms, 2-3 minutes.
- 9 Beat in the spices, vanilla extract, and brandy if using; if desired, beat in a little white colouring paste to adjust the colour of the buttercream.
- 10 Split the cakes in half horizontally with a serrated bread knife to yield four halves. Spread a little buttercream onto a cake stand to act as glue for the cake.
- 11 Place one cake half on the cake stand and top with a thick layer of buttercream. Place a second cake half on top, pressing down gently to adhere, and top with a layer of buttercream.
- 12 Repeat with the remaining cake halves and buttercream, making sure there is enough buttercream to top the cake and its sides with a thin masking layer.
- 13 Cover the cake with an oiled piece of clingfilm and chill for at least 30 minutes.
- 14 To decorate: When ready to serve, discard the clingfilm and decorate the top of the cake with pine sprigs around the perimeter.

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