

Ingredients

- 175g/6oz Rasins
- 275g / 10oz Currents
- 175g / 10oz Sultana's
- 100g / 4oz Glace cherries
- 100g / 4oz Ready to eat Apricots
- 1/4pt / 150ml cooking brandy
- 90oz / 250g softened butter
- 255g / 9oz / dark muscavado sugar
- 4 x large eggs
- 1 tblsp Black treacle
- 85g / 3oz blanched almonds
- 225g / 8oz plain flour
- ½ tspn mixed spice
- ½ tspn ground nutmeg

Equipment

- Large Mixing bowl
- Medium mixing bowl
- 8in / 20cm round loose bottom baking tin
- Baking parchment
- Cling film
- Wooden Spoon
- Silicon spatula

Preparation

A couple of days before your ready to make your cake you should fruit mix ready.

1. First we need to deal with the cherries, cut them into rough quarters and then rinse them off under the tap (easy way to do this is to put them in a sieve). Next place them on a couple of paper towels and leave to one side to dry off.
2. Now take the apricots and cut them up into roughly the same size, taking care not to eat too many while doing this.
3. In a medium size mixing bowl add all the dried fruits, cherries and apricots, giving them a good shake to mix them up.
4. Now it is time to add the brandy, measure out ¼ pint / 150ml of brandy and pour over the fruit, give it a quick mix with a spoon, then cover with cling film and leave in a dark cool place for the next couple of days. For the best results I find leaving the mix for around a week. Give it a mix every day to make sure all the fruit gets soaked with the brandy, add extra brandy if needed.

Making the cake

1. Pre-heat your oven to 140c / 275f / gasmark 1
2. Prepare your tin by greasing the sides and bottom with butter, then line it with a double layer of grease proof paper, there are a couple of ways to do this you can either use a couple of sheets of the paper pressing it down into the tin and smoothing it out. If you have a little more time then draw round the base of the tin and cut out a couple of circles, put them to one side then create a collar of paper to go around the inside of the tin. Layer the paper round the outside of the tin then drop the circles into the base of the tin.
3. Weigh out your flour and put it into your mixing bowl, there is no need to sieve flour any longer. Now add the butter, eggs, sugar chopped almonds and black treacle.
Tip: If you cube your butter a few hours before hand it will soften much faster, if you're in a hurry, you can zap it in the microwave for around 10/20 seconds.
4. Now for the work out, mix them all together until you have a nice smooth mix with no noticeable lumps of flour. Add the mixed spice and nutmeg and give another thorough mix.
5. Add the soaked fruit to the mix and stir in until well distributed.
6. Spoon the mix into your lined tin, getting it as level as possible; it does not need to be perfect. One way to make sure there are not air holes in the side of the bottom is to drop the tin on a work surface a couple of times.
7. Place in the middle of the oven for around 4 – 4 ½ hours
8. Check on the cake after around 2 hours and put a foil protector over the cake.
9. At around the 4 hour mark check the bake using a cocktail stick or skewer, if when skewered it comes out clean then it is ready.
10. Remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin for an hour or so, then remove and place on wire rack to completely cool.

Now you have a lovely Christmas cake, however you can feed it over the next few weeks. Transfer your cake to a cake box and spoon over a table spoon of brandy every week until you are ready to decorate.