



## Christmas Cake Recipe

**By Mrs Tombs (Deputy Catering Manager)**

To make the ideal Christmas cake if you haven't already made it you really need to get it underway, so you have enough time to 'feed' the cake to get it full of flavour and moist. Traditionally Christmas cake is fed with your tippie of choice...brandy, sherry, rum or whisky but I actually prefer to feed mine with strong breakfast tea instead.

One of my favourite Christmas treats is adding Christmas cake to a cheese board. Christmas cake with a wedge of strong stilton is just fabulous!

Below is my favourite Christmas Cake recipe:

- 1kg Mixed dried fruit (I use a mix of raisins, sultanas, currents, cherries, cranberries, prunes and figs but add your favourite dried fruit)
- Zest and Juice of 1 orange
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 150ml of brandy, sherry, whisky or rum (I use strong breakfast tea instead) plus extra for feeding
- 250g unsalted butter, softened
- 200g light brown sugar
- 250g plain flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground cloves
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

## Directions

- Put the mixed dried fruit, the zest and juice of the orange and lemon, 150ml of your tippie of choice or breakfast tea, butter and light brown sugar in a large saucepan over a medium heat.
- Bring the mixture to the boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes, tip the mixture into a large bowl and leave to cool for 30 mins.
- Heat the oven to 130c. Line a deep 20cm cake tin with a double layer of baking parchment, then wrap a double layer of newspaper around the outside and tie with string to secure. Because this is a dense cake the newspaper will slow down the cooking on the outside of the cake leaving a more even bake. If you don't do this step you will find the sides of the cake will be burning before the middle of the cake is cooked.
- add the plain flour, baking powder, mixed spice, cinnamon, cloves, eggs and vanilla mixture and stir well, making sure there are no pockets of flour.
- tip into your prepared tin, level the top with a spatula and bake in the centre of the oven for 2 hours. Check the cake is cooked by inserting a skewer into the centre of the cake, if it comes out clean then it's cooked. If you find that the top of your cake is catching, then place baking parchment on top.
- Remove the cake from the oven and poke holes in it with a skewer and spoon over 2 tbsp of your chosen alcohol (or tea). Leave the cake to cool completely in the tin.
- To store, peel off the baking parchment, then wrap well in clingfilm. Feed the cake by spooning over 2 tbsp of your chosen alcohol (or tea) every 7-10 days stopping the week before you ice it. This allows the top to dry so icing is easier.

Icing the Christmas cake has always been a Christmas Eve tradition in my house, we have done everything from novelty decorations of Santa being stuck down the chimney to classic dried fruits and holly with a beautiful ribbon tied round.