

EASTER TREATS

Easter Bread (Freezes really well)

Ingredients

Basic yeast dough

510g (1lb, 2 oz) strong white flour
1 ½ teaspoons fast acting yeast
9 fl oz lukewarm milk
100g (3½ oz) melted butter
100g (4 oz) caster sugar
1 large egg
Grated rind of ½ lemon

50g (2 oz) flaked almonds – optional
150g (6 oz) mixed dried fruit
1 tablespoon rum or brandy

Glaze

50g (2 oz) caster sugar
50g (2 oz) melted butter

23cm (9 inch) cake tin - greased

Method

1. Sieve the flour into a mixing bowl
2. Stir in the yeast, sugar, milk, melted butter, egg and lemon rind
3. Combine well to form a dough
4. Turn out onto a well-floured surface and knead for 5 - 10 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic - this can be done in a food mixer with a **dough hook**
5. Cover with a tea towel and leave to rise in a warm place for 1 hour
6. Mix together the dried fruit, almonds if used and rum or brandy and leave to stand
7. Once the dough has risen mix in the fruit mixture (either by hand on a **well-floured work surface** or with a dough hook) **The dough will be sticky**
8. Divide the dough into 11 pieces and shaped each into a ball
9. Place them around the edge of the cake tin reserving one for the middle (alternatively form into a plait and shape into a ring (crown) - leave in a warm place until puffy (around ½ an hour)
10. Bake in a **preheated** oven 190 degrees or mark 5 for 30 - 35 minute
11. While still hot brush the loaf with melted butter and sprinkle with sugar. Serve buttered

Ricotta Cheesecake Flan (Freezes really well)

Ingredients

Pastry

200g (8 oz) plain flour
100g (4 oz) softened butter
1 large egg - beaten
25g (1 oz) icing sugar
A little milk for brushing

Filling

350g ricotta cheese (12 oz)
2 large eggs - beaten
100g (4 oz) caster sugar
50g ground almonds
Few drops vanilla essence **or grated rind of ½ an orange, or 50g (2 oz) dried fruit or candied peel or 50g (2 oz) chocolate chips**
A little melted apricot jam for glazing

Method

1. Sieve the flour, mix in the icing sugar, rub in the butter and stir in the egg to form a dough, cover and refrigerate for 15 minutes. Alternately place all the ingredients in a food processor and combine
2. Using ¾ of the pastry, roll out and line a 20cm (8 inch) flan dish

3. Mix together all the filling ingredients and spread evenly over the pastry base
4. Roll out the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ of the pastry plus any trimmings and cut into 8 strips to form a lattice
5. Dampen the edges of the pastry rim and lay 4 strips of pastry each way
6. Brush with a little milk and bake at 180 degrees (Mark 4) for 35 - 40 minutes
7. Brush with melted apricot jam while still warm

NOTE If you are going to freeze this, omit brushing with jam until you are ready to serve it

An All Seasons Open Fruit Tart

Ingredients

Base

175g (6 oz) plain flour
100g (4 oz) softened butter
25g (1 oz) icing sugar
Grated zest of 1 orange

Topping

250g tub of mascarpone cheese
5 tablespoons double cream
1 tablespoon caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
Approximately 550g (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb) mixed fruit
- strawberries, raspberries, mango, blueberries

To Glaze

4 tablespoons melted seedless raspberry jam

Method

1. Put all the base ingredients into a food processor and blitz until the mixture comes together - or mix together the flour and icing sugar, rub in the butter, add the orange zest and bring together to form a ball
2. Place a sheet of non-stick baking paper onto a baking sheet and roll to a 20cm (8 inch) round
3. Crimp the edges with your fingers and bake in a preheated oven at 180 degrees or Mark 4 for 20 - 25 minutes and leave to **cool completely**
4. Beat together the mascarpone, cream, sugar and vanilla essence
5. Place the **cold** base onto a serving plate
6. Gently spread the topping over leaving a rim around the edges
7. Arrange the fruits on top building it up
8. Carefully brush the fruits with melted raspberry jam

Please Note The base can be made several days in advance and stored in an airtight container or it can be frozen **BUT** the **finished dish is not suitable for freezing**

Variations

1. **Winter or when you have no suitable soft fruits to hand** - Use well drained tinned pear halves or quarters, **substitute the vanilla essence for 25g (1 oz) cocoa powder to the mascarpone mixture and drizzle the pears with 50g melted dark chocolate.** You can also add a little liquor to the mascarpone mixture (Kahlua works really well) Pears and chocolate are a wonderful combination
2. **Fresh or tinned pineapple drizzled over with a little rum. Add 25g (1 oz) desiccated coconut to the mascarpone mixture omitting the vanilla.** Use apricot jam to glaze.
3. **Fresh sliced nectarines or peaches** work really well and when using either of these I like to add a little **Amaretto** to the mascarpone and use melted apricot jam to glaze
4. Defrost **frozen cherries**, add a tablespoon of brandy, mix thoroughly and spoon over the mascarpone. Any red jam can be used for a glaze.

The list of fruits is endless