



FAMILY FRIENDLY SIMNEL CAKE

25 MINS
PREP

SERVES
11-12

SESAME
FREE

GLUTEN
FREE

VEGGIE

This time of year it's traditional to make a Simnel cake. So we got busy in the Babease kitchen and thought we would have a go at a gluten-free, refined sugar-free version that is just as yummy as the original recipe yet much healthier. It's also super easy to make and perfect for the whole family to enjoy!

We also chose to make our own marzipan to keep the cake sugar free! The almonds we used were quite coarse which gives it a nutty texture but feel free to use finer ground almonds if you want to get a more traditional finish.

WHAT YOU NEED

For the Marzipan:

250g ground almonds
3 tablespoons maple syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla essence (use almond essence if you like a stronger almond flavour)

For the Cake:

250g Medjool dates, roughly chopped
200ml boiling water
100g soft butter
1/4 teaspoon bicarbonate soda
200g ground almond
3 eggs
2 teaspoons mixed spice

WHAT TO DO

Start off by making the marzipan. Empty all the ingredients into a bowl and knead until you get a dough that is not too sticky. Add more almonds if it sticks to your hands.

Knead for 3-5 minutes - it is a good job to give to your little one if they are old enough to help out! Wrap with cling film and put to one side. It can also be done a day in advance.

To make the cake -

Pre-heat the oven to 150 degrees then grease and line an 8-inch cake tin.

Put the chopped dates into a pan with the hot water and the bicarbonate of soda. Bring to a boil, stir and then leave to stand for 10 minutes. Whilst the dates are resting, put the butter, almond and mixed spice into a blender.

Once the dates have sat for 10 minutes, add the full contents of

1 teaspoon baking powder
20g coconut flour
250g mixed dried fruits (we used raisins and cranberries)
100g of dried cherries
zest of 2 oranges
juice of 1 orange
zest of 2 lemons
2 tablespoons of your favourite jam (we used plum!)

the pan (including the liquid) into the blender and blend until smooth. Do not worry if there are one or two lumps as it all adds to the texture. Whilst the blender is still running, add the eggs one at a time until well blended, being careful not to over blend. Remove the lid and sieve in the coconut flour. Blend one last time until the flour has been incorporated.

Meanwhile, in a bowl large enough to hold the cake mix weigh out the remaining ingredients. Pour over the blended cake mix and stir to combine.

Tip half of the mix into the prepared cake tin and put to one side.

Divide the marzipan into three and roll one of the thirds into a disk to approx the same size of the cake tin, and place on top of the mix. Tip over the remaining cake mix on top of the marzipan disc and spread evenly, pushing the mix to the edge of the tin.

Place the cake in a pre-heated oven and bake for 30 minutes before covering with foil and returning the cake to bake for a further 90 minutes or until it's cooked through. This may sound like a long time, however, the density of the cake and moistness from the dried fruit can take it! The cake is ready when a knife comes out clean.

Cool the cake on the rack. Once cooled put the jam in a small pan with one tablespoon of water and heat until melted. Then brush the mix all over the top of the cake to help hold the marzipan in place. Roll out 1/3 of the remaining marzipan and cut a disk the size of the cake, using the base of the cake tin for measurement, then lay on top of the jam.

If you would like to decorate the cake in the traditional way make 11 balls of marzipan and blowtorch each one individually to a delicious golden brown before placing on top of the finished cake using some more of the jam mix if needed.

Enjoy and Happy Easter! :)

