



For

Rednosed Reindeer Cake

(Serves 8-10)

This moist fruity cake made with Bonne Maman Apricot, Mirabelle Plum or Fig Conserve is crammed full of festive flavours and will make a memorable centrepiece for a beautifully laden table. Absolutely delicious, it also happens to be gluten-free and dairy-free with no compromise on taste.

Ingredients

400g mixed dried fruit
300ml dry cider or apple juice
225g stoned whole dates
1 tbsp mixed spice
2 tbsp Bonne Maman Apricot, Mirabelle Plum or Fig Conserve
1 large ripe banana
Finely grated zest of 1 orange and 1 lemon
120g fine polenta
2 tsp baking powder (use gluten-free baking powder if wished)
2 large egg whites or 5 tbsp chilled aquafaba
2 tbsp brandy or dry sherry, optional

Method

1. Put the dried fruit in a large mixing bowl and pour in 100ml of the cider or apple juice. Leave to soak overnight.
2. Heat the oven to 180C, 160C fan, gas 4. Line an 18cm round, 10cm deep cake tin or 6 small 220g baked bean tins with baking parchment.
3. Put the dates, spice, conserve and remaining 200ml cider or apple juice into a saucepan and simmer gently for 5 mins. Take off the heat and leave to cool.
4. In a blender or processor, puree the date mixture with the banana. Transfer to a mixing bowl and fold in the citrus zest, soaked dried fruit, polenta and baking powder.
5. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites or aquafaba into soft peaks and fold into the fruit mixture. Spoon into lined cake tins.
6. Bake for 25-30 mins for individual cakes or 45-50 mins for a large one, covering with foil after 30 mins. A skewer pushed into the centre of the cake should come out clean when it's cooked.
7. Drizzle the brandy or sherry over the hot cake, if using, then leave to cool in the tin. The cooked cakes keep well, wrapped in clingfilm and foil, in an airtight tin for up to 3 days, or can be frozen undecorated.

How to decorate:

- To make the Rudolph Reindeer cakes, make two large fruit cakes or 6 individual cakes.
- Sandwich the two large cakes together with extra Bonne Maman conserve.
- Roll out 300g white fondant icing and, using the cake tins as a template, cut a curving line about 3cm out from the edge of the tin.
- Brush the top of the cake/s with a little extra Bonne Maman conserve and cover the top/s with the fondant icing.
- Roll 50g red fondant icing into one large or 6 small red 'noses' and press onto the middle of the cake/s.
- To learn how to make your own gingerbread reindeer antlers for decoration, see the recipe at www.bonnemaman.co.uk