

## SPRING SHOW 2016

### SIMNEL CAKE

#### Ingredients

500g/1lb 2oz mixed dried fruit  
100g/4oz glace cherries, halved  
175g/6oz butter, softened, plus extra for greasing  
225g/8oz self-raising flour  
175g/6oz light muscovado sugar  
Zest of 1 lemon  
2 level tsp ground mixed spice  
3 eggs, beaten  
2 tablespoon milk

#### For the filling and topping

450g/1lb golden marzipan  
1 tbsp apricot jam, melted  
1 egg white, beaten, to glaze

#### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 160c/325F/fan140c/gas3

Grease a 20cm/8" loose-based deep round cake tin and line the base and sides with baking parchment. Cream the butter and sugar together in a large bowl until light and creamy and add lemon zest. Gradually add the beaten eggs, a little at a time to prevent them curdling. Sift the flour and mixed spice and mix it in a little at a time. Stir the dried fruit and cherries thoroughly into the mixture. Place half the mixture into the lined cake tin and level the surface. Lightly dust a sheet of baking parchment with sifted icing sugar. Take one-third of the marzipan and roll it out on the baking parchment into a circle the size of the tin and then place the round of marzipan carefully on top of the cake mixture making sure it reaches the sides. Spoon the remaining cake mixture on top and smooth the surface. Wrap the remaining marzipan portions tightly in cling film to prevent them from drying out.

Bake for half an hour and then turn the oven down to 150c/300f/fan130c/gas2 for another 1½ hours or until the cake has risen and is firm on top. You may want to cover the cake loosely with foil or greaseproof paper if the top is beginning to brown too much before it is ready in the middle.

Leave to cool in the tin for 15 minutes then remove from the tin, peel off the baking parchment and finish cooling on a wire rack.

#### To decorate

When the cake is cool, place on a baking tray or grill pan. Warm the apricot jam. Brush the top of the cake with the melted apricot jam and roll out half of the remaining marzipan into a circle, just a little larger than the cake tin. Press firmly on the top and crimp the edges to decorate and using the tip of a knife, score a criss-cross pattern over the marzipan in two directions at roughly 2.5cm/1" intervals. Form the remaining marzipan into 11 balls to represent all the Apostles, minus Judas. Each of the balls needs to weigh approximately 16-20g/½-¾oz so you may have a little marzipan left over.

Beat the egg white – just till it's a bit frothy and brush one side of each ball with egg white and place around the edge of the cake. Brush the whole of the cake with egg white and blowtorch the marzipan or place the cake under a pre-heated grill – around 15-20cm/6-8" from the element – for 2-3 minutes to turn the marzipan golden-brown. Watch the marzipan carefully so that it doesn't burn. Leave to cool.

Transfer the cake to a plate and decorate the cake by tying a ribbon around the middle.

