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A 19th Century Christmas Cake Recipe

This is a family recipe from about 1850. You can change the fruit as required, as long as the total weight of fruit remains the same, chopped apricots, cranberries, flame raisins will work just as well. It's all in imperial measures due to the age of the recipe. This cake is best made in late August, giving it enough time to mature in time for Christmas. You should have enough mixture left to make a testing cake so you can have a cheeky try of what to expect when Christmas comes.

Ingredients:

- 8oz Butter
- 8oz Moist Brown Sugar
- 6 Large Eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon dark treacle
- 9oz Plain Flour (Gluten free works very well!) Double sifted.
- 1 rind & Juice lemon
- 1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons brandy/rum/sherry
- 8 oz Currants
- 8oz Seedless Raisins
- 8oz Sultanas
- 8oz Valencia Raisins (Lexias)
- 2oz Chopped Almonds
- 2oz Cut Peel, (chop it yourself)
- 3oz Glace Cherries, (washed to remove syrup, dried on kitchen paper, chopped and add a small amount of flour, to prevent sinking)
- Warm Water if necessary

Instructions:

- Use a 9-10" Round + Tasting cake (Smallest cake tin 5")
- Double greaseproof lined tin, to come 2" above rim. Add a collar of brown paper around the outside.
- Prepare fruit in large bowl and mix thoroughly.
- Use creaming methods to add the treacle to the butter & sugar.
- Beat the eggs and add the Brandy and a bit of flour to prevent it from curdling.
- Sift salt & nutmeg into the flour.
- Now slowly mix it all together.
- When you get the mixture to a soft consistency pour it into the tins until it is level with the top with a slight indentation in middle. (Please note the cake will not rise much).

- Place it in to the oven on the middle shelf and bake for 30 minutes on Gas Mark 3 / 170c.
- After 30 minutes turn the oven down to Gas Mark 2 / 150c for 3.1/2 hours
- With about 1 hour to go, cover top of cake with more greaseproof, to prevent over browning.
- Do a skewer test to ensure it is done and let it cool in the tins.
- Remove from the tins and wrap in foil. Then store the cake in an airtight tin.
- Feed the cake with brandy every now and then. (Use a fork to make holes)

After a few months of soaking you can now decorate it how you desire. Traditionally the base is covered with marzipan and royal icing. Decorations can be bought from cake decorating shops to make the cake look extra Christmassy.

This recipe can easily be multiplied for larger cakes to make it suitable for Wedding & Christenings or you could keep it the same size and use different decorations or a different coloured icing to make fit every occasion.