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mary berry victoria sponge recipe

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Mary Berry Victoria Sponge Recipe: A Classic British Delight

When it comes to quintessential British desserts, few stand out as elegantly as the Victoria sponge. This light, airy cake—named after Queen Victoria—has become a staple in tea rooms and family kitchens alike. And when the recipe comes from the celebrated baker Mary Berry, a master of traditional English baking, you can be sure you're getting the best version of this timeless treat.

Why Mary Berry's Victoria Sponge Is a Must Try

Mary /Berry, the beloved judge on *Britain's Got Talent* and a prolific cookbook author, has refined the Victoria sponge into a flawless, reliable recipe that even novice bakers can master. Her version balances simplicity with depth of flavor: the batter's subtle vanilla and lemon zest, the gentle rise of the sponge, the silky strawberry jam, and the luscious vanilla buttercream combine to create a cake that is both comforting and impressive.

Below, we'll walk through Mary Berry's classic Victoria sponge recipe step by step, share useful tips, explore variations, and answer common questions so you can create the perfect cake for any occasion.

Ingredients Overview

Before you begin, gather all the ingredients. Having everything on hand will make the process smoother and help you avoid last minute trips to the store.

- 200 /g unsalted butter, softened
- 200 /g caster sugar
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- 200 /g self raising flour
- 1 /tsp baking powder (optional, for extra lift)
- 1 /tsp ground cinnamon (optional, for a subtle spice note)
- 1 /tsp vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 2 /tbsp milk, to adjust consistency
- 100 /g strawberry jam (or raspberry for a twist)
- 200 /g butter, softened (for the filling)
- 100 /g icing sugar, sifted
- 1 /tsp vanilla extract (for the filling)
- Fresh berries or a dusting of icing sugar for garnish

Step by Step Instructions

1. Prepare Your Baking Tools

Preheat the oven to 180 °C (350 °F). Line two 20 cm (8 in) round cake tins with parchment paper and grease the sides lightly. This ensures the cakes release easily after baking.

2. Cream the Butter and Sugar

In a large mixing bowl, beat the softened butter and caster sugar together until the mixture is pale, fluffy, and has doubled in volume. This aeration is crucial for the sponge's lightness.

3. Add Eggs One at a Time

Introduce the eggs, one by one, to the butter sugar mixture. After each addition, beat thoroughly to ensure the mixture remains smooth. The eggs help bind the batter and provide structure.

4. Incorporate Dry Ingredients

Sift the self raising flour, baking powder (if using), and cinnamon into a separate bowl. Fold these dry ingredients into the wet mixture gently with a spatula, being careful not to deflate the batter. The goal is a smooth, lump free consistency.

5. Add Flavorings

Stir in the vanilla extract and lemon zest. If the batter feels too thick, add a tablespoon of milk to reach a pourable consistency. The lemon zest adds a bright, fresh note that complements the jam.

6. Divide and Bake

Evenly distribute the batter between the prepared tins. Tap the tins lightly on the counter to release any large bubbles. Bake for 20 25 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean. The cakes should be golden brown on top.

7. Cool Completely

Remove the cakes from the oven and let them cool in the tins for 5 minutes. Then turn them out onto a wire rack to cool completely. Cooling is essential to prevent the cakes from becoming soggy when the jam is added.

8. Prepare the Vanilla Buttercream

In a bowl, beat the softened butter until creamy. Gradually add the sifted icing sugar and vanilla extract, beating until the mixture is light and fluffy. If it's too stiff, add a splash of milk to loosen it slightly.

9. Assemble the Cake

Place one cake layer on a serving plate. Spread a generous layer of strawberry jam over the top, then add a layer of vanilla buttercream. Carefully place the second cake layer on top. Finish by glazing the entire cake with the remaining buttercream.

10. Garnish and Serve

Decorate with fresh berries or a light dusting of icing sugar. Slice and serve with a cup of tea or coffee. The Victoria sponge tastes best within a day of baking, but it can be stored in an airtight container for up to three days.

Pro Tips for a Flawless Victoria Sponge

- Room Temperature Eggs: Eggs at room temperature mix more evenly, ensuring a smooth batter.
- Gentle Folding: Overmixing can cause the sponge to become dense. Fold the flour in just until combined.
- Even Baking: Use two tins of the same size and type to ensure uniform baking.
- Check with a Skewer: Insert a clean skewer into the center; if it comes out clean, the sponge is ready.
- Cool Before Filling: Adding jam to a warm cake can cause it to soak in and become soggy.

Variations to Try

1. Raspberry Victoria Sponge

Swap the strawberry jam for raspberry jam for a slightly tart flavor. Add fresh raspberries on top for an extra burst of color.

2. Lemon Zest Victoria Sponge

Increase the amount of lemon zest and add a tablespoon of lemon juice to the batter. Finish with a lemon glaze or a dusting of powdered sugar.

3. Chocolate Victoria Sponge

Add 30 g of cocoa powder to the dry ingredients and reduce the sugar slightly. Use chocolate jam and a chocolate buttercream for a richer dessert.

4. Gluten Free Version

Replace the self raising flour with a gluten free all purpose blend that includes a leavening agent. Adjust the baking time slightly, as gluten free cakes can brown faster.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I make the Victoria sponge ahead of time?

A: Yes. Bake and cool the cakes, then assemble and refrigerate. The buttercream can be made in advance and kept in the fridge for up to 48 /hours.

Q: What's the best jam to use?

A: Traditional strawberry jam is the classic choice. For a more modern twist, try raspberry, apricot, or even a spiced plum jam.

Q: How do I keep the sponge from getting soggy?

A: Ensure the cakes are completely cooled before adding jam. If you must assemble on the same day, consider using a thin layer of jam and a generous amount of buttercream to create a moisture barrier.

Q: Can I use a different type of butter for the filling?

A: While salted butter adds a subtle flavor, it may alter the sweetness balance. Unsalted butter is recommended for precise control.

Conclusion

Mary Berry's Victoria sponge recipe is a testament to the beauty of simple, well executed baking. With just a handful of ingredients and a few careful steps, you can create a cake that feels both homemade and refined. Whether you serve it for a tea party, a birthday celebration, or a quiet evening at home, this classic British dessert is sure to delight. Grab your oven, follow the steps, and enjoy the timeless pleasure of a perfectly risen Victoria sponge.

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