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Welcome...



I don't know about you, but for me it feels like last Christmas was only a few weeks ago – where did all the time go? Spring and summer have passed us by, Autumn is in full swing, and before we know it the whole family will have descended again, ready for another indulgent period of festive eating and drinking. And if you'd like to treat your loved ones to your best creations yet, you've come to the right place as we've got some really delicious recipes in store for you over the next 113 pages.

As always, we've packed the issue with 101 recipes ranging from classic cakes and bakes to indulgent puddings, easy bakes the kids will really love helping out with, mouthwatering handmade gifts, and a few tasty tipples for you to enjoy at the end of the day. One of my favourite recipes this issue is the Christmas tree surprise cake on page 37. It'll take a bit of work as it's made up of lots of different sponge layers, but the finished effect is fantastic, and when you cut the cake open the looks on people's faces will be worth all the effort. It's the ideal alternative for anyone who's not a fan of the classic fruit cake and marzipan combination too!

I really hope you enjoy the issue and that it inspires you to bake lots of new goodies for family and friends this year. Have a great Christmas and I'll see you next year!

Nick

Nick Gregory Editor

Christmas train biscuits cover image
© Stockfood, The Food Media Agency



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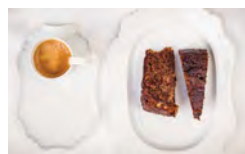
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Christmas

CAKES & BAKES





Mince pies

By Edd Kimber (www.theboywhobakes.co.uk)

Makes 15-20

FOR THE FILLING

600g (1lb 4oz) mincemeat, shop bought or homemade

200g (7oz) marzipan or almond paste, shop bought or homemade

1 large free-range egg, lightly beaten

FOR THE SWEET PASTRY

1 vanilla pod

400g (14oz) plain flour

35g (1¼oz) ground almonds

75g (2¾oz) icing sugar

a pinch of salt

250g (9oz) unsalted butter, diced and chilled

2 large free-range egg yolks

1 tbsp ice cold water

1 For the pastry, cut the vanilla pod in half through the middle and scrape out the seeds. Add to the bowl of a food processor along with the flour, almonds, icing sugar and salt. Pulse a handful of times until everything is mixed evenly. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Add the egg yolks and the water and pulse briefly just to distribute, but stopping well before the dough comes together as a ball (the finished texture should be crumbly). Tip the dough out onto a work surface and use your hands to bring together into a uniform dough. Divide the dough into two batches, flatten into discs, then wrap in clingfilm, refrigerating for at least 1 hour or until firm.

2 Roll out a piece of the dough on a lightly floured work surface, rolling to about 3mm (1/8in) thick. Use an 8cm (3¼in) round cookie cutter to cut out as many discs as you can, setting the trimmings aside. Use the pastry discs to carefully line the holes of two 12-hole bun or muffin trays. Repeat with the second piece of dough, cutting out 6cm (2½in) lids. Briefly knead the scraps of dough back together and re-roll, cutting out extra discs for more pies. Take the almond paste and roll into small balls, pressing into flat discs and pacing into the base of each pie. Fill each pie level with mincemeat; don't overfill as the pies have a tendency to leak and glue themselves to the tins if you do. Dip your finger in the egg and run around the edge of each mince pie and top with a lid, pressing gently together to seal. Use a knife or a fork to press a couple of holes into the lids and finally brush the lids with the remaining egg. Chill the pies for 20-30 minutes.

3 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Once the pies are chilled, bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the pastry is a golden brown. Allow to cool in the trays for 10 minutes, before carefully lifting out and setting onto a wire rack to cool completely.

TIP This recipe uses a traditional shallow bun tin. If you use a muffin tin your pastry bases will need to be a little bigger so you will make less, around 15.





Eggnog cake

By Edd Kimber (www.theboywhobakes.co.uk)

Serves 10-12

FOR THE CINNAMON CAKE

325g (11oz) plain flour

50g (1¾oz) cornflour

4½ tsp baking powder

225g (8oz) butter

200g (7oz) caster sugar

200g (7oz) light brown sugar

1 tbsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp vanilla extract

5 large free-range egg whites

250ml (9fl oz) whole milk

FOR THE EGGNOG BUTTERCREAM

250g (9oz) butter

650g (1lb 6oz) icing sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

3 tbsp whiskey, brandy or rum

a pinch of salt

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Lightly grease and line three round 20cm (8in) cake tins with parchment paper.
- 2 For the cake batter, use an electric mixer to beat together the butter and sugar in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and vanilla, one at a time, and beat together until smooth and uniform. Mix in the flour, cornflour, baking powder and cinnamon in three additions, alternating with the milk.
- 3 Divide the batter evenly between the cake tins, then bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes, or until the cake is coming away from the edges of the tin and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean.
- 4 Leave the cakes to cool in the tins for 10 minutes, before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Use a large serrated knife to level the cakes.
- 5 For the buttercream, place the butter in a large bowl and slowly beat in the icing sugar, on high speed until light and fluffy. Add the vanilla, alcohol and salt and beat together for 2 minutes.
- 6 To decorate, place the first cake layer onto a cake stand or serving plate and spread with a layer of buttercream. Top with the second cake and repeat, finishing by placing the final cake layer on top. Spread the remaining buttercream over the top and sides of the cake. Decorate with the reserved cake crumbs, sprinkling around the outside of the cake.

Bitter flourless chocolate cake with coffee cream

By Diana Henry

Serves 8

FOR THE CAKE

160g (5¾oz) unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing

320g (11½oz) good-quality dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), broken into pieces

145g (5¼oz) caster sugar

5 large free-range eggs, separated

40g (1½oz) ground almonds

icing sugar, to dust

FOR THE CREAM

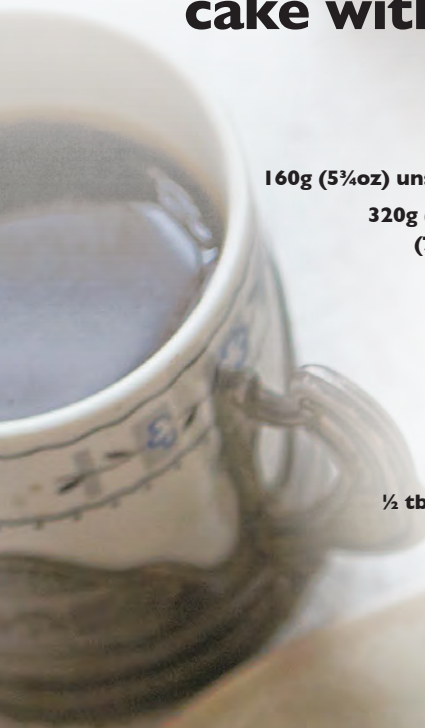
300ml (½pt) double cream

½ tbsp instant espresso coffee, dissolved in ½ tbsp boiling water

2 tbsp whiskey, or to taste

3 tbsp icing sugar, or to taste

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Butter a 20cm (8in) springform cake tin.
- 2 Put the chocolate, butter and sugar into a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water (the water shouldn't touch the bowl). Melt the mixture, stirring a little. Remove the bowl and leave it to cool for about 4 minutes. Stir in the egg yolks, one at a time.
- 3 Beat the egg whites with electric beaters until they form medium peaks (stiff, but with the peaks drooping slightly). Using a big metal spoon, fold the ground almonds into the chocolate mixture along with half the egg whites, then fold in the rest of the whites.
- 4 Scrape the batter into the tin and bake for 35 minutes. Cool completely, carefully remove the ring and base and put the cake on a serving plate. It will deflate and crack as it cools.
- 5 Whip the cream until just holding its shape, then drizzle in the coffee and whiskey, still whipping. Add the icing sugar and taste for sweetness and booziness. Sift icing sugar over the cake and serve with the cream.



Recipe taken from *Simple: effortless food, big flavours* by Diana Henry, published by Mitchell Beazley. (RRP £25).

Croquembouche

Makes 75 choux buns

FOR THE BUNS

450ml (13fl oz) water

150g (5½oz) butter, cubed

180g (6½oz) plain flour, sifted

6 large free-range eggs, beaten

FOR CRÈME PATISSIÈRE

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

4 free-range egg yolks

40g (1½oz) cornflour

1 tsp vanilla extract

500ml (18fl oz) whole milk

40g (1½oz) butter

FOR THE CARAMEL

300g (10½oz) caster sugar

225ml (8fl oz) water

TO DECORATE

edible fresh flowers, washed and dried

- 1 For the choux buns, preheat the oven to 220°C/Gas Mark 7, then grease three large baking trays. Place the water and butter in a pan and heat until the butter has melted and the water begins to boil. Remove from the heat, add the flour, then beat vigorously to a firm paste. Gradually add the egg, a little at a time, until a smooth batter forms and leaves a lasting ribbon trail in the bowl – you may not need all the egg.
- 2 Spoon the mixture into a large piping bag fitted with a 5mm (¼in) plain nozzle. Pipe about 25 x 2cm (¾in) rounds on each baking tray, spaced well apart to allow for spreading.
- 3 Bake in the oven for 10 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Bake for a further 10 minutes until crisp and brown. Remove from the oven and use a knife to make a slit in the side of each bun, before returning to the oven for 2 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and leave to cool.
- 4 For the crème patissière, whisk the sugar, egg yolks, cornflour and vanilla together in a large bowl until pale and fluffy. Heat the milk in a pan until almost at boiling point. While whisking continuously, pour the milk into the egg mixture until fully combined. Pour the mixture into the pan and heat gently, whisking continuously until the mixture thickens and comes to the boil. Remove from the heat, beat in the butter, then leave to cool completely. Place the mixture in a large piping bag fitted with a filling tube or plain nozzle. Fill each bun through the slit in the side. Chill the buns for later.
- 5 For the caramel, place the sugar and water in a large pan and heat gently, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat and allow the mixture to boil rapidly, but do not stir. As soon as the mixture becomes a pale golden brown, remove from the heat as it will continue to darken once removed, but will easily burn if over cooked.
- 6 To assemble the croquembouche freehand, you are aiming to make a stack with an external base diameter of 20cm (8in) and a height of about 35cm (14in). Working directly on your serving plate, very carefully dip the choux buns into the caramel one at a time, coating one side – handle with care and use tongs if necessary as the caramel will be very hot. Create a ring of buns on the serving plate, allowing the caramel coating to stick the buns together. Repeat the process, placing another ring of buns on top of the base buns just slightly smaller in diameter. Stand back and check each layer before progressing to the next,



making sure that you are building an even cone shape which is going to reach the correct height. Continue the process, decreasing the diameter on each layer, until you have reached the top. Alternatively, use a cone to assemble the choux buns following the manufacturer's instructions.

- 7 To decorate with spun sugar strands, use a fork to lift thin stands from the caramel pan, then twist them around the choux buns. For the finishing touch, decorate with a few edible flowers.



Snowmen cupcakes

By Baking Mad (www.bakingmad.com)

Serves 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 150g (5oz) unsalted butter**
- 150g (5oz) unrefined golden caster sugar**
- 3 free-range eggs**
- 150g (5oz) self-raising flour**
- ½ tsp baking powder**
- a few drops of vanilla extract**

TO DECORATE

- 500g (1lb 1oz) icing sugar**
- 160g (5½oz) unsalted butter**
- 50ml (1¾fl oz) whole milk**
- 1½ tsp vanilla extract**
- 50g (1¾oz) desiccated coconut**
- white sugarpaste**
- black sugarpaste**
- red sugarpaste**
- orange sugarpaste**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole muffin or cupcake tin with paper cases.
- 2** Beat the butter and sugar in a bowl until light and creamy. Gradually beat in the egg, then stir in the flour, baking powder and vanilla extract until smooth.
- 3** Spoon the mixture into the paper cases, then bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes until well risen and golden.
- 4** For the buttercream, beat together the butter, icing sugar, milk and vanilla extract until smooth. Spread on top of the cupcakes and sprinkle with desiccated coconut.
- 5** To make the snowman, shape two balls of white sugarpaste, one slightly larger than the other, to form the head and base. Roll out a small amount of red sugarpaste in a small sausage shape and wrap it around the neck of the snowman to form the scarf.
- 6** Roll out small balls of black sugarpaste and stick to the snowman to form the eyes, mouth and buttons.
- 7** To finish, roll out a small amount of orange sugarpaste into a cone shape and attach to the snowman for the carrot nose. Secure the snowmen on top of the cupcakes.

Champagne cake

By Melissa Forti

Serves 10-12

FOR THE CAKE

100ml (3½fl oz) vegetable oil, plus extra for greasing

4 free-range egg whites, at room temperature

225g (8oz) caster sugar

280g (10oz) plain flour, sifted

3 tsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

245ml (9fl oz) Champagne, at room temperature

2 tbsp double cream

1½ tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE FILLING AND FROSTING

500ml (18fl oz) plus 2 tbsp double cream

2 tbsp icing sugar

80g (3oz) good-quality strawberry jam

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Lightly oil two 20cm (8in) cake tins and line the bases and sides with baking parchment.

2 In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment (or in a mixing bowl and using a hand-held electric whisk), whisk the egg whites until frothy, then whisk in 100g (3½oz) sugar in small additions, whisking until stiff peaks form and the meringue looks glossy.

3 Put the flour, baking powder, remaining sugar and salt in a separate bowl. Add the vegetable oil, Champagne, cream and vanilla. Beat until incorporated, then gently fold in the whisked egg whites. Divide the batter between the tins and bake for 30 minutes, until a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tins for 10 minutes, before inverting onto a wire rack to cool completely.

4 Meanwhile, place a stand mixer or a mixing bowl in the freezer for 15-20 minutes to chill. Using the whisk attachment or a hand-held electric whisk, whisk the double cream and icing sugar together in the chilled bowl, until it reaches a spreadable consistency.

5 To assemble, spread a thin layer of jam over one cake and top with whipped cream. Place the other cake over the first and, using a spatula, spread the whipped cream evenly over the top and sides.

TIP If you'd like a pink cake, add a drop or two of strawberry or raspberry purée to the whipped cream.



The recipes on pages 14-15 are taken from *The Italian Baker* by Melissa Forti, photography by Danny Bernardini, published by Quadrille. (RRP £20).



Spiced festive cake

By Melissa Forti

Serves 8-10

FOR THE CAKE

200g (7oz) butter, at room temperature, plus extra for greasing
250g (9oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting
2 tsp baking powder
200g (7oz) caster sugar
2½ tbsp ground cinnamon
2 cloves, crushed
1 tsp ground nutmeg
finely grated zest of 1 orange
1 tsp almond extract
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tbsp Cointreau liqueur
3 free-range eggs
120ml (4fl oz) milk (you can also use almond milk for a nutty flavour)
90g (3½oz) ground hazelnuts
60g (2oz) finely chopped almonds
icing sugar, for dusting

- 1** Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3. Carefully grease the insides of a bundt tin with butter; making sure you coat every corner. Dust with flour; then tilt and rotate the tin to coat the insides evenly, tipping out the excess.
- 2** Sift the measured flour into a bowl, add the baking powder; then set aside.
- 3** Put the sugar; cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, orange zest, almond extract and vanilla in the bowl of a stand mixer (or into a mixing bowl, and use electric hand-held beaters) and beat on a low speed to allow the spices to blend and coat the sugar. The smell will be divine at this point!
- 4** Add the butter and beat on a medium speed until fluffy. Add the Cointreau and continue beating. Beat in the eggs, one at a time. When all the ingredients are incorporated, fold in the flour and baking powder mixture, and the milk, in three small additions and alternating them. Finally, fold in the ground hazelnuts and chopped almonds.
- 5** Transfer the mixture to the tin and bake for 40-45 minutes, until a skewer inserted in the cake comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, before inverting onto a plate.
- 6** When cool, dust with icing sugar to serve, or top with sugar-coated cranberries, holly, or any other decoration you fancy.



Cherry chestnut chocolate chip cookies

By Alanna Taylor-Tobin

Makes 14

55g (2oz) raw pecan halves
115g (4oz) unsalted butter
½ a vanilla pod, split lengthwise and scraped
110g (4oz) organic light brown sugar
50g (1¾oz) organic granulated cane sugar
80g (2¾oz) chestnut flour
30g (1oz) tapioca flour
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
½ tsp fine sea salt
1 large free-range egg
170g (6oz) dark milk chocolate, coarsely chopped
55g (2oz) dried cherries

- 1 Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and preheat to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Line two rimless baking sheets with parchment paper.
- 2 Spread the pecans on another baking sheet and toast for 8-10 minutes until fragrant and slightly darkened in colour. Remove and cool completely, then break into rough quarters.
- 3 Meanwhile, melt the butter and vanilla pod and scrapings in a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan over a medium heat. Continue to cook for 3-5 minutes, swirling occasionally, until the butter turns golden and smells nutty.
- 4 Place the sugars in a large bowl and, when the butter has browned, scrape it and any browned bits into the sugar immediately to stop the cooking. Allow to cool, stirring occasionally for 10 minutes. Remove the vanilla pod and discard.
- 5 Meanwhile, sift together the chestnut and tapioca flours, bicarbonate of soda and salt into a medium-sized bowl. Set aside.
- 6 When the sugar mixture has cooled to warm, beat in the egg until well combined. Use a wooden spoon to stir the flour mixture into the sugar mixture, stirring until well combined, then continue to stir vigorously for a few more seconds; the mixture will firm up slightly. Stir in the cooled pecans, chopped chocolate and cherries until evenly distributed. If the dough is soft, let it sit at room temperature or in the refrigerator to firm up for 15-30 minutes.
- 7 Scoop the dough into 4cm (1½ in) diameter balls (about 3 tbsps) and place them on the baking sheets, spacing them 5-7.5cm (2-3in) apart.
- 8 Bake the cookies for 10-14 minutes, until the edges are golden and set and the tops are pale golden, but still soft and under-baked, rotating the sheets back to front and top to bottom after 8 minutes for even baking.
- 9 Remove the cookies from the oven, allow to cool on the sheets for a minute, then pull them, parchment and all, onto cooling racks to stop the cooking. They will be very soft and fragile at first, but will firm up when cool. Let cool to warm, at least 10 minutes, before devouring.



The recipes on pages 16-18 are taken from *Alternative Baker* by Alanna Taylor-Tobin, published by Page Street Publishing. (RRP \$24.99).





Chestnut brownies

By Alanna Taylor-Tobin

Makes 16

- 85g (3oz) unsalted butter**
- 230g (8oz) bittersweet chocolate, chopped**
- 50g (1¾oz) chestnut flour**
- 2 tbsp tapioca flour**
- 3 large free-range eggs, at room temperature**
- 150g (5½oz) granulated cane sugar**
- ½ tsp fine sea salt**
- 1 tsp vanilla extract**

- 1** Position a rack in the centre of the oven and preheat to 180°C/ Gas Mark 4. Line a 20cm (8in) square baking tin with two crisscrossed pieces of parchment paper, cut to fit width-wise, leaving an overhang on each side. This will make the brownies easy to remove from the pan.
- 2** Place the butter in a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan set over the lowest possible heat. Add the chocolate and melt together, stirring frequently to prevent the chocolate from scorching. Continue cooking until the mixture is pleasantly warm, but not super hot, to the touch. Remove from the heat and keep warm. Sift the chestnut and tapioca flours into a small bowl and set aside (chestnut flour tends to clump, so don't skip this step).
- 3** Place the eggs, sugar and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and whip on medium-high speed until the mixture is light and fluffy. Turn the mixer to low and stir in the vanilla until just combined, then add the warm chocolate-butter mixture. Add the flour mixture and mix on low until combined. Remove the bowl from the mixer and give the batter a final stir, making sure all the flour is incorporated.
- 4** Scrape the batter into the baking tin and smooth into an even layer. Bake the brownies for 25-30 minutes, until the top is puffed and a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out with moist crumbs. Let the brownies cool completely, then use the parchment handles to lift them out of the tin and onto a cutting board. Use a sharp knife to slice the brownies into 16 squares.



Spiced orange and almond cake

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Serves 8

8 Essential Waitrose Easy Peelers
vegetable oil, for greasing

5 free-range eggs, separated

200g (7oz) caster sugar

250g (9oz) ground almonds

2 tsp Waitrose Signature Spice (ground)

2 tbsp clear honey or maple syrup, to serve

a little icing sugar, for dusting

- 1** Put four of the easy peelers in a saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 25 minutes, then drain and cool slightly. Whizz to a purée in a food processor.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Brush the base and sides of a 23cm (9in) springform cake tin with a little oil and line the bottom with baking parchment. In a large bowl, whisk the egg yolks and half the caster sugar until pale and fluffy. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites until they form stiff peaks, then whisk in the rest of the sugar.
- 3** Fold the puréed easy peelers, ground almonds and spice into the egg yolk mixture. Fold a quarter of the egg whites into the mixture to loosen it, then carefully fold in the rest. Pour the mixture into the cake tin and bake for 55-60 minutes, until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin.
- 4** Turn the cake out onto a serving plate. Peel the rest of the easy peelers and cut them into slices. Arrange on top of the cake and drizzle over the honey or syrup. Dust with icing sugar and serve.

Thousands more recipes can be found @ www.waitrose.com



Berry and frangipane tart

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Serves 8

1 sheet of puff pastry

300g (10½oz) frozen mixed berries

80g (2¾oz) butter, softened

½ tsp vanilla extract

75g (2¾oz) caster sugar

2 free-range egg yolks

1 tbsp plain flour

120g (4½oz) ground almonds

- 1** Preheat the oven to 220°C/Gas Mark 7. Grease a 20x30cm (8x12in) baking tin.
- 2** Fold out the pastry to cover the base and sides of the tin. Gently press into the tin, prick all over with a fork and place in the freezer for 5 minutes.
- 3** Top with greaseproof paper and baking beans and bake blind for 5 minutes. Remove from the oven, cool for 5 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 4** For the frangipane, place the butter, vanilla, sugar and egg yolks in a bowl, beat until light and fluffy, then stir in the flour and ground almonds. Spread over the pastry base, sprinkle on the berries and bake for about 25-30 minutes, or until golden brown.



Christmas robin cake

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 1

TO DECORATE

100g (3½oz) Lakeland Vanilla Flavour Frosting
brown food colouring

250g (9oz) ready-to-roll white icing
icing sugar, for rolling and dusting

25g (1oz) ready-to-roll red icing

Lakeland Edible Glue
Renshaw Flower & Moulding Paste

black food colouring
lemon yellow food colouring

FOR THE CAKE

115g (4oz) butter, softened, plus extra for greasing

115g (4oz) caster sugar
2 free-range eggs

115g (4oz) self-raising flour, sieved

1 tsp baking powder
20g (1oz) cocoa powder, sieved

- Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3. Grease two Lakeland Small Hemisphere Cake Pans with a little butter.
- In a mixing bowl, beat the butter and sugar with an electric hand mixer until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs, then gently fold in the flour, baking powder and cocoa powder.
- Divide the mixture between the cake pans, ensuring the surfaces are level, then place on a baking sheet. Bake for 25-30 minutes, until well risen and firm to the touch.
- Let the cakes cool in the pans for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack and leave to cool completely.
- To decorate, spread half the frosting onto the flat surface of one cake, then sandwich with the second cake to create a sphere. Sit the sphere gently on a cooking ring to hold it steady, then spread a thin layer of frosting all over it, setting aside a little frosting for later.
- Taking care to add just a little at a time, add brown colouring to the white icing until the desired shade is reached.
- On a surface lightly dusted with icing sugar, roll out 200g (7oz) brown icing into a 28cm (11 in) circle. Place the icing over the cake and gently smooth it down the sides, pinching it together on the underside and smoothing out any creases with your hands. Fix the cake to a board with the leftover frosting.
- Roll out the red icing into a circle and cut it into a heart shape for the robin's red breast. Stick it to the front of the cake with a little water.
- Roll out the remaining brown icing and cut out two wings and a tail, then stick these to the cake with small dabs of edible glue.
- Colour a pea-sized piece of moulding paste black and shape two eyes. Colour another pea-sized piece yellow and shape a small beak. Stick the eyes and beak onto the robin with edible glue. Dust the cake with icing sugar to create a wintry scene.

Christmas stollen

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Serves 12

350g (12oz) strong white bread flour

½ tsp salt

2 tsp easy-blend yeast

50g (1¾oz) caster sugar

150ml (5fl oz) milk, warmed until hand-hot

100g (3½oz) butter, softened, plus a little extra for greasing

1 free-range egg, beaten

50g (1¾oz) sultanas

50g (1¾oz) currants

50g (1¾oz) dried apricots, chopped

50g (1¾oz) glacé cherries, washed, dried and quartered

25g (1oz) candied peel, chopped

25g (1oz) blanched almonds, chopped

grated zest of 1 lemon

175g (6oz) marzipan

FOR THE GLAZE

100g (3½oz) icing sugar

1 tbsp lemon juice

I Sift 300g (10oz) flour and the salt into a large bowl. Add the yeast and sugar, then mix. Make a well in the centre and add the warmed milk, butter and egg. Stir the mixture until it is

well combined and leaves the sides of the bowl cleanly. Add the remaining ingredients, except the marzipan, then knead for about 10 minutes on a surface dusted with some of the remaining flour, until springy and elastic.

2 Return the dough to the bowl, cover in greased clingfilm and leave to rise in a warm place until doubled in size; this can take up to 2 hours. Knead the risen dough on a surface dusted with the remaining flour until smooth and elastic, then roll into a 25x20cm (9½x8in) rectangle.

3 Shape the marzipan into a long sausage, slightly shorter than the length of the dough, and place it in the centre. Fold the dough over to enclose the marzipan. Transfer to a large greased baking sheet and cover with a stollen mould. Leave to rest in a warm place until doubled in size. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5.

4 Bake the stollen for 35-40 minutes. Leave to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Sift the icing sugar into a bowl and mix in the lemon juice. Spread over the stollen while still warm, then allow to cool before serving.

TIP The stollen will keep for up to 1 week in an airtight container.





Classic Christmas cake

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Serves 8-10

- 125g (4½oz) glacé cherries, halved**
- 100g (3½oz) dried apricots, chopped**
- 200g (7oz) currants**
- 200g (7oz) sultanas**
- 200g (7oz) raisins**
- 75g (2¾oz) candied peel, chopped**
- 100g (3½oz) dried cranberries**
- 150ml (5fl oz) sherry, brandy, rum or brewed tea**
- grated zest and juice of 4 clementines**
- 250g (9oz) unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for greasing**
- 250g (9oz) light soft brown sugar**
- 2 tsp vanilla extract**
- 4 free-range eggs**
- 200g (7oz) plain flour**
- 2 tsp mixed spice**
- 50g (1¾oz) flaked almonds**
- 50g (1¾oz) chopped hazelnuts**

- 1** Place the dried fruit, alcohol or tea, zest and juice into a large bowl. Mix well, cover and leave overnight.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 2½. Butter and double-line a deep cake tin with enough baking parchment to extend about 3cm (1¼in) over the top of the tin.
- 3** Wrap the outside of the tin with a few sheets of brown paper and secure with string.
- 4** In a large bowl, beat the butter, sugar and vanilla until creamy, then beat in the eggs, one at a time.
- 5** Add the flour and mixed spice, soaked fruit and any liquid and the nuts. Mix together, then transfer the mix to the cake tin.
- 6** Using a spoon, make a slight dent in the centre of the surface, then bake for 90 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 140°C/Gas Mark ½. Loosely cover the top of the tin with foil or baking parchment, then bake for another 45-60 minutes until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin, then remove and wrap in baking parchment.
- 7** Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place for up to 6 months. Every 2 weeks, feed the cake by piercing with a skewer and sprinkling over a little more alcohol or tea.

TIP For a simple decoration, warm a little sieved apricot jam and brush it over the cake before topping with marzipan. Roll out some ready to roll white icing and decorate using a cake stencil, before transferring to the cake. Trim away the excess.



Raspberry and white chocolate tart

By Berry World (www.berryworld.com)

Serves 6-8

FOR THE PASTRY

110g (4oz) plain flour

55g (2oz) unsalted butter, cut into 1cm (1/2in) cubes

FOR THE FILLING

400g (14oz) white chocolate

200ml (7fl oz) double cream

50g (1 1/2oz) unsalted butter

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

400g (14oz) raspberries

- 1 For the pastry, whizz the flour and butter in a food processor to form fine crumbs. Add just enough cold water to bring it together; just 2-3 tbsp should do it. Wrap in clingfilm and allow to rest in the fridge for 20-30 minutes.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5.
- 3 Lightly grease a 23cm (9in) tart tin and roll the pastry into a circle big enough to line it. Don't worry if it cracks a little, just patch it up in the tin using a little water if you need to stick it together. Prick the base all over with a fork, line with baking paper and baking beans, then blind bake in the oven for 20 minutes until crisp. Remove the pastry case from the oven, take out the baking beans and allow to cool completely while you make the filling.
- 4 Make the filling by breaking up 350g (12oz) white chocolate and adding to a heatproof bowl, along with the double cream, butter and vanilla. Set the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water and allow the chocolate and butter to melt, stirring frequently until you have a thick shiny sauce. Pour into the baked and cooled pastry case and place in the fridge to set firm for about 1 hour.
- 5 Once set, remove from the fridge and decorate the surface of the tart with fresh raspberries, either in a pretty pattern or randomly, as you like. Melt the remaining white chocolate in a small heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water. Drizzle the melted chocolate over the raspberries.



Dark chocolate and stout cake

By Bryan Graham

Serves 10-12

FOR THE CAKE

300g (10oz) unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing

330ml (11¼fl oz) stout

580g (1lb 5oz) caster sugar

270g (9½oz) plain flour

85g (3oz) cocoa powder

1 tsp baking powder

a generous pinch of salt

seeds from 1 vanilla pod

130g (4¾oz) honey

5 free-range eggs

75g (2½ oz) buttermilk

175g (6oz) good-quality dark chocolate, finely grated

dark chocolate curls, to decorate

FOR THE GANACHE

340g (11¼oz) good-quality dark chocolate, chopped

255g (9¼oz) double cream

85ml (3fl oz) stout

45g (1½oz) unsalted butter, softened

- 1** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3. Grease and line two 20cm (8in) deep cake tins with baking parchment. Bring 80ml (2¾fl oz) stout to the boil in a small saucepan over a medium heat. Add 80g (2¾oz) sugar and stir until dissolved. Remove the syrup from the heat and leave to cool.
- 2** Sift the flour, cocoa powder and baking powder into a bowl. Cream the butter, remaining sugar, salt and vanilla in a mixer until pale and fluffy. Add the honey, then the eggs, one at a time, pulsing until combined.
- 3** Add one-third of the flour mixture to the mixer on a low speed until just combined. Gradually add the buttermilk. Add another third of the flour mixture, then the remaining stout. Mix in the remaining flour mixture until combined. Fold the grated chocolate into the batter.
- 4** Divide the batter evenly between the cake tins and bake for 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Remove the sponges from the oven and allow to cool in their tins.
- 5** While the sponges are cooling, prepare the ganache. Place the chopped chocolate in a medium heatproof bowl. Combine the cream and stout in a saucepan and bring to a simmer, ensuring that it does not boil.
- 6** Remove the mixture from the heat and pour it over the chocolate in the bowl. Allow to stand for 1-2 minutes. Add the butter to the bowl and begin stirring the mixture, starting in the middle and moving outwards in small circular motions, until combined. Pour the mixture into the mixer, allow to cool a little, then whisk until spreadable.
- 7** Remove the cooled sponges from the tins. Brush a generous amount of the stout syrup onto the top of one of the sponges using a palette knife, then spread a few generous spoonfuls of ganache on top.
- 8** Layer the second sponge on top of the first, and soak it with syrup. Cover the whole cake very thinly with ganache using a palette knife. Refrigerate for 15 minutes.
- 9** Remove the cake from the fridge and cover with the remaining ganache. Decorate with chocolate curls and serve. You can cover and store the cake in the fridge for up to 2 days, allowing the cake to return to room temperature before serving.



Recipe taken from *Chocolate* by Dom Ramsey, published by DK. (RRP £14.99).





Fig and cranberry Christmas cake

By Aneka Manning
Serves 8-10

300g (10½oz) dried figs

200g (7oz) pitted prunes

200g (7oz) raisins

300g (10½oz) dried cranberries

200g (7oz) sultanas

100g (3½z) currants

110g (3¾oz) fig jam

finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange

185ml (6fl oz) brandy or orange liqueur, plus 60ml (2fl oz) extra

185g (6½oz) unsalted butter, at room temperature, cubed

110g (3¾oz) brown sugar

1½ tsp vanilla extract

4 free-range eggs

200g (7oz) blanched almonds (optional), plus 160g (5¾oz) extra, coarsely chopped, to decorate (optional)

225g (8oz) plain flour

50g (1¾oz) almond or hazelnut flour

½ tsp baking powder

2 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp mixed spice

½ tsp ground ginger

2 tbsp apricot jam, warmed, sieved, to glaze

1 Chop the figs, prunes and raisins to the same size as the sultanas. Put in a large bowl with the cranberries, sultanas, currants, jam, orange zest and juice and brandy. Cover and set aside at room temperature overnight.

2 Position the oven rack so the middle of the cake will sit in the centre of the oven, and preheat the oven to 150°C/Gas Mark 2. Grease and line the base and sides of a 20cm (8in) square or 22cm (8½in) round cake tin with baking paper and wrap the tin with newspaper to protect the cake.

3 Use an electric mixer to beat the butter, sugar and vanilla until pale and creamy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition (the mixture will appear curdled). Use a wooden spoon to stir in the soaked fruit and almonds (if using).

4 In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, almond flour, baking powder and spices to combine. Add to the fruit mixture and use a wooden spoon and then your hands to mix lightly until well combined.

5 Spoon the mixture into the baking tin and press firmly into the corners. Lift and gently drop the tin a work surface 4-5 times to get rid of any air pockets. Smooth the surface and decorate with the extra chopped almonds (if using). Put the tin on the baking tray and cover the cake with a piece of foil. Bake in the oven for 2 hours. Remove the foil and continue to bake for a further 1½-2 hours, or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.

6 Pour the extra brandy evenly over the top of the hot cake. Trim any overhanging paper, cover the tin with foil, then wrap in two tea towels (dish towels). Leave to cool overnight.

7 Unwrap the cake, brush the top with the jam, then cut into slices.



This recipe and the Christmas cake on page 26 are taken from *BakeClass* by Anneka Manning, published by Murdoch Books. (RRP AUD \$45).

Spiced gingerbread with lemon glaze

By Anneka Manning
Serves 12

FOR THE CAKE

melted butter, to grease
260g (9¼oz) plain flour
1½ tsp ground ginger
1 tsp mixed spice
110g (4oz) firmly packed brown sugar
125g (4½oz) butter, cubed
175g (6oz) golden syrup
125ml (4fl oz) water

1¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 free-range egg, at room temperature

grated lemon zest strips to decorate (optional)

FOR THE LEMON GLAZE

125g (4½oz) icing sugar, sifted

2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease a 16x26cm (6¼x10½in) baking tin with melted butter and line the base and two long sides with one piece of baking paper, allowing it to overhang the sides.
- 2 Sift together the flour and spices in a medium bowl. Stir in the sugar, breaking up any lumps with the back of a wooden spoon. Make a well in the centre.
- 3 Combine the butter, golden syrup and water in a small saucepan and heat over a medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the butter melts and the mixture is heated through. Stir in the bicarbonate of soda and allow the mixture to foam. Add to the dry ingredients, with the egg, and stir with a wooden spoon until just combined.
- 4 Pour the mixture into the baking tin and smooth the surface with the back of a spoon. Bake in the oven for 25 minutes, or until a skewer inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean.
- 5 For the lemon glaze, combine the icing sugar and lemon juice in a medium bowl and mix until smooth. Cover and set aside.
- 6 Remove the gingerbread from the oven and place the tin on a wire rack. Spoon the lemon glaze over the warm cake, spreading it evenly as you go. Scatter over the lemon zest strips, if using. Set aside to cool in the tin. Use the paper handles to lift the cake from the tin and place on a cutting board. Cut into portions to serve.



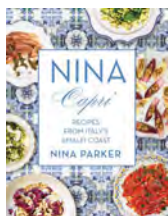
Chestnut banana cake

By Nina Parker

Serves 8

- 190g (6¾oz) chestnut flour**
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda**
- ½ tsp gluten-free baking powder**
- a pinch of sea salt**
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon**
- 4 ripe bananas, peeled, mashed**
- 85g (3oz) buttermilk, or whole milk with a few drops of lemon juice**
- 1 tsp vanilla extract**
- 110g (4oz) soft unsalted butter**
- 225g (8oz) muscovado sugar**
- 2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease and line a 24cm (9¼in) cake tin with baking parchment.
- 2** Combine the flour; bicarbonate of soda, baking powder, salt and cinnamon in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix the banana with the buttermilk, or whole milk with lemon drops and vanilla extract.
- 3** In a stand mixer, cream the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy – this takes about 5 minutes. Still beating, gradually add a little of the beaten eggs, followed by a spoonful of the dry mix.
- 4** Keep alternating and adding until all the egg and dry mix has been incorporated. Use a spatula to gently fold in the banana mixture until just combined.
- 5** Pour the batter into the cake tin and bake for about 40 minutes, until golden and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool on a cooling rack for 15 minutes, before carefully removing from the tin to cool completely.
- 6** Serve immediately, or, if you have the will power, wrap in clingfilm, where it will keep well for up to 3 days.



The recipes on pages 28-30 are taken from *NINA Capri* by Nina Parker, photography by Paul Winch-Furness, published by Orion. (RRP £25).

Mocha pecan cake

By Nina Parker

Serves 10

FOR THE BASE

350g (12oz) pecans

390g (13¾oz)
caster sugar

8 free-range
eggs, separated

2 tbsp brown or
white rice flour

FOR THE ICING

2 free-range egg yolks

3 tbsp caster sugar

2 tbsp instant coffee
granules, sieved

500g (1lb 1oz)
mascarpone

20g (¾oz) dark
chocolate, grated (at
least 70% cocoa solids)

FOR THE PECAN TOPPING

10g (½oz) unsalted
butter

50g (1¾oz) pecans,
toasted

2 tbsp honey

- 1 Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3. Grease and line two 27cm (11in) cake tins with baking parchment.
- 2 For the base, blitz the pecans in a blender or food processor until you have very fine crumbs. Remove and set aside. Whisk 210g (7¼oz) sugar with the egg yolks in a bowl, until just combined, then mix in the flour and ground pecans.

- 3 Use a stand mixer or electric handheld mixer to whisk the egg whites until they form stiff peaks. With the mixer set at a fast speed, add the remaining sugar, a little at a time, until incorporated. Fold in the pecan mixture along with one-third of the whites – the mixture will seem a little dry, but keep folding until everything is combined. Fold in the remaining whites, a third at a time, taking care not to over-mix. Carefully divide the batter between the cake tins and bake on separate shelves for about 30 minutes, until golden and a skewer inserted into the cake comes out fairly clean. Remove from the oven and allow to cool to room temperature on a cooling rack. Turn out of the tins only when cooled.
- 4 For the icing, in a stand mixer or using an electric handheld mixer; whisk the egg yolks and sugar until very pale and creamy. Add the coffee granules and mascarpone and whisk until just combined. Divide the icing between the two cake halves, spreading it with the back of a spoon to smooth and sprinkle with grated chocolate. Carefully sit one half over the other.
- 5 For the finishing touch, melt the butter in a small frying pan over a medium heat. Once melted, add the pecans and honey. Stir well, then remove from the heat and leave to cool for 5 minutes. Drip the pecan and honey mixture over the cake to decorate it. It keeps well for 2 days in the fridge.





Chocolate and pear frangipani

By Nina Parker

Serves 10-12

FOR THE PASTRY

330g (11oz) wholegrain spelt flour

100g (3½oz) unrefined icing sugar

180g (6oz) cold unsalted butter, diced

1 free-range egg yolk

1 tbsp cold water

FOR THE PEARS

3 ripe pears, cored, peeled and cut into 1cm (½in) pieces

20g (1oz) unsalted butter

1½ tbsp caster sugar

a pinch of ground cinnamon

FOR THE FRANGIPANE

150g (5½oz) dark chocolate

150g (5½oz) soft unsalted butter

150g (5½oz) caster sugar

3 free-range eggs, lightly beaten

200g (7oz) ground almonds

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 For the pastry, beat the flour, sugar and butter in a stand mixer on a medium speed for 5 minutes, until it forms a crumbly consistency. Add the egg yolk and 1 tbsp cold water and mix for a further 4-5 minutes. Increase the speed and beat until everything comes together into a ball. Wrap up the dough in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for at least 1 hour.

- 2** Grease a 25cm (10cm) loose-bottomed, non-stick tart tin. Grate a thin layer of the chilled pastry to cover the bottom of the tin. Use your fingers to press and mould the pastry into a nice thin layer, and grate some more for the edges. Make sure there are no gaps and the tin is neatly lined all over with pastry. This needs to be done swiftly so that the pastry doesn't get too warm. You may have some surplus pastry. Line the pastry with baking parchment, fill the base with baking beans and bake on the top shelf of the oven for about 40 minutes, or until lightly golden. Remove and allow to cool on a cooling rack.
- 3** Meanwhile, prepare the pears. Set a saucepan over a medium heat and put all the ingredients into the pan. Mix well and allow the pears to soften. Cook for about 10 minutes, then set aside.
- 4** For the frangipane, melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water, making sure the bowl does not touch the water. Once the chocolate has melted, remove from the heat. Using a stand mixer or handheld electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy on a fast speed.
- 5** Turn the speed to medium, gradually drizzle in the beaten eggs, then mix in the ground almonds and vanilla extract. Carefully pour the frangipane filling into the pastry base and arrange the pears in a pattern on top. Pour over the melted chocolate.
- 6** Carefully place the tart tin on a baking tray and bake for 40 minutes. Remove and leave to cool. Carefully remove the tart from the tin and serve just warm.



Metallic snowflake cake

By Rainbow Dust (www.rainbowdust.co.uk)

Serves 6-8

Renshaw Chocolate Sugarpaste

tylo powder

one 10cm (4in) and one 13cm (5in) round chocolate cake

**Rainbow Dust Edible Silk in Metallic Flame Frenzy,
Morrocan Velvet & Ginger Glow**

buttercream

edible glue

TOOLS

snowflake cutter

**no 3 plain end piping tube (to cut the holes out of the
snowflake shape)**

small star plunger cutter

closed scalloped crimper

dusting brush

smoother

side edger

dowels

20cm (6in) round 12mm drum board

10cm (4in) round 1mm thin board

rolling pin

- 1** Place the 10cm (4in) cake on the corresponding cake board and the 13cm (5in) cake onto the 20cm (6in) cake drum. Split and fill each cake with buttercream, then apply a crumb coating. Place into the fridge to chill while you roll out the chocolate sugarpaste. Use to cover the bottom tier first, including the drum board, all in one. Trim off any excess sugarpaste, then crimp around the edge of the board using a closed scallop crimper. Leave to one side while you cover the top tier cake. Leave overnight to firm.
- 2** Add tylo powder to the remaining chocolate sugarpaste (about 1 tsp to 250g (9oz) sugarpaste) and knead in well. This is done to create a firmer paste, ideal for decorations and models. Roll out on a dusted work surface, then use a small snowflake cutter to cut each shape out. Cut out the centre using a star cutter, and use a plain end piping tube for the tiny circles around the edge of the snowflake. Let each shape dry.
- 3** Brush each snowflake shape using the edible metallic dusts.
- 4** Dowel and stack the cakes.
- 5** Roll the chocolate sugarpaste into a long sausage shape, using a smoother to roll back and forth to keep the shape even. Brush around the base of each tier with edible glue, placing the sausage shape on top, then trim to fit.
- 6** Secure each snowflake onto the cake using edible glue, then brush a small amount of edible silk onto the crimped edging to finish. Add a gold ribbon around the drum board using a glue stick to secure in place.



Ginger and rhubarb cake

By Martha Collison

Serves 8-10

FOR THE GINGER CAKE

100g (3½oz) butter, plus extra for greasing

125g (4½oz) dark muscovado sugar

50g (1¼oz) treacle

50g (1¼oz) golden syrup

1 ball of stem ginger, from a jar in syrup

100ml (3½fl oz) whole milk

1 free-range egg

125g (4½oz) plain flour

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

½ tsp ground ginger

½ tsp ground cinnamon

FOR THE RHUBARB FILLING

200g (7oz) rhubarb

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

FOR THE CANDIED RHUBARB

100g (3½oz) rhubarb

pink gel food colouring

FOR THE RUNNY ICING

150g (5½oz) icing sugar

- 1** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 3. Grease an 18cm (7in) cake tin and line with baking parchment.
- 2** For the cake, heat the butter, sugar, treacle and syrup together in a large saucepan, stirring until the butter is melted and the sugar has dissolved. Melting the fat and sugar together gives ginger cake its characteristic stickiness, so make sure the mixture is smooth and there are no grains of sugar visible. Finely chop the stem ginger.
- 3** Add the milk to the saucepan and whisk until combined. This will cool the mixture down before you add the egg, stopping it from scrambling. Beat in the egg, then stir in the chopped stem ginger.
- 4** Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda and spices together in a large bowl. Pour the wet mixture over the top and beat together until smooth.
- 5** Chop the rhubarb for the filling into 5cm (2in) long pieces and put into a saucepan with the caster sugar and 100ml (3½fl oz) water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes, or until the rhubarb is soft, but not disintegrating. Remove the rhubarb with a slotted spoon and put on a sheet of kitchen paper to cool. Reserve the cooking syrup for later.
- 6** Pour the cake mixture into the prepared tin, then arrange the chunks of rhubarb on top. They will sink into the middle of the cake, so don't worry about being tidy.
- 7** Bake for 35-40 minutes, or until a skewer inserted comes out clean and the cake no longer wobbles. Allow the cake to cool completely in the tin. Meanwhile, turn the oven down to 120°C/Gas Mark ½.
- 8** For the rhubarb twirls, trim the ends off the sticks of rhubarb and use a vegetable peeler to peel them into long thin strips. Put the peeler at the top and pull down firmly along the length, to get clean-cut pieces. Discard the first layer of peelings, as the skin will not dry out as well as the flesh.
- 9** Gently heat the syrup left over from the boiled rhubarb with a tiny amount of pink food colouring, then remove from the heat. Dip the rhubarb strips into the syrup one by one, then put onto a parchment-lined baking tray. Bake the strips for 1 hour (baking the fruit on a low temperature like this dries it out and makes it crisp).
- 10** Find a spoon handle or chopstick that is a perfect cylinder. Once the rhubarb strips are done, remove them from the oven and, working quickly as they will harden as they cool, take a warm strip and wrap it around the cylinder. It should harden quickly and slide off easily. If the rhubarb is still sticky or hardens too fast, return it to the oven to soften and dry a little more before trying again. Repeat with all the strips to create crisp, pink curls.
- 11** For the icing, mix the icing sugar with 2-3 tbs water, or until it is a thick, but runny paste. Spread the icing over the cake, using a palette knife or the back of a spoon to encourage it to drip down the sides, then top with the rhubarb curls. This cake will keep for 4-5 days – if it lasts that long!



Recipe taken from *Twist* by Martha Collison, photography by Tara Fisher, published by HarperCollins. (RRP £16.99).





A Christmas gingerbread train

Serves 10-12

FOR THE GINGERBREAD

180g (6oz) butter, softened

225g (8oz) dark brown sugar

150g (5oz) treacle

2 medium free-range eggs

2 tbsp water

600g (21oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting

1 tbsp ground ginger

1 ¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda

¾ tsp salt

1 tsp ground cinnamon

TO DECORATE

2 white icing pens

milk and white chocolate buttons

icing sugar

white string

- 1 For the gingerbread, cream together the butter and brown sugar in a large mixing bowl until light and fluffy, about 2-3 minutes. Beat in the treacle, eggs, and water.
- 2 Combine the flour, ginger, bicarbonate of soda, salt, and cinnamon in a separate bowl and then add it to the creamed mixture in three additions, beating well between additions until you have a smooth, soft dough. Divide the dough in half and shape into discs. Wrap in clingfilm and chill for 30 minutes.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease and line two large baking trays with greaseproof paper.
- 4 Lightly flour a work surface and roll out both doughs to approximately 5mm (¼in) thickness.

- 5 Working freehand with a sharp paring knife, cut out five train engine shapes, making sure that three are the same size and two of them cut smaller on their fronts – these will be the outer trains (see image for direction). These two smaller pieces should also have wheels fashioned on them.
- 6 Cut out the remaining shapes of the carriages; you should cut out 15 carriages for the back three train carriages as well as five evenly-sized pieces for the second carriage. Make sure that one piece of gingerbread for each carriage has a loop cut on both ends in order to connect the carriages together with string. Eight of the gingerbread pieces should have two wheels shaped on them.
- 7 Arrange the gingerbread pieces between the two baking trays, spaced apart. Bake for about 10 minutes until set at the edges and firm to the touch. Remove to wire racks to cool.
- 8 To decorate, once the gingerbread pieces are completely cool, use some icing to sandwich each carriage together as per the image; the carriages with loops should be in the middle of the stacks and the carriages with wheels on the outer ends.
- 9 Use the pens to decorate the outsides of the carriages in decorative patterns, drawing on train features as per the image.
- 10 Secure chocolate buttons to each carriage using more icing as glue. Stand the carriages upright and tie together using kitchen string, linking the carriages using the prepared loops.
- 11 Dust with icing sugar before serving.



Kringle

By Trine Hahnemann

Makes 3

FOR THE KRINGLE

100ml (3½fl oz) plus 1 tbsp lukewarm milk

50g (2oz) fresh yeast

3 free-range eggs, lightly beaten

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

1 tsp salt

350g (12oz) butter

550g (11lb 3oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting

FOR THE FILLING

150g (5½oz) almonds, roughly chopped

200g (7oz) sugar

250g (9oz) soft butter

150g (5½oz) raisins

1 free-range egg, lightly beaten

50g (1¾oz) flaked almonds



Recipe taken from
Scandinavian Comfort Food
by Trine Hahnemann,
photography by Columbus
Leth, published by Quadrille.
(RRP £25).

- 1** Pour the milk into a bowl, crumble over the yeast and stir to dissolve. Add the eggs, sugar and salt, then cover and leave for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, cut the butter into cubes and rub them into the flour. When the 30 minutes are up, mix the yeast mixture into the flour mixture. Knead on a floured surface until you have a smooth dough. The dough is very delicate, so you might have to use a bit more flour. Place in a bowl, cover and leave to rise at room temperature for about 1 hour.
- 2** For the filling, mix the chopped almonds into a paste with the sugar and butter. Set aside.
- 3** Roll the dough out on a floured surface into a rectangle. Fold it into three, crossways, like a business letter; then turn it by 90 degrees. Divide into three and roll each out into a rectangle.
- 4** Divide the filling into three. Spread each portion out over a 4cm (1½in) wide strip down the middle of each rectangle. Scatter the raisins over the filling. Fold the short ends up over the filling and then the long sides, first one side over the filling and then the other, so they overlap by 1cm (½in). Place on baking sheets lined with baking parchment, cover with tea towels and let rise again for 30-45 minutes, or until the dough feels a bit puffy when you touch it gently. Preheat the oven to 220°C/Gas Mark 7.
- 5** Brush each pastry with egg and sprinkle with the flaked almonds. Bake for 15-20 minutes, keeping an eye on them so they don't turn too dark. If they are looking too dark, reduce the oven temperature to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Cool on a wire rack and serve warm or cold.



Christmas tree surprise cake

By Elise Strachan
Makes 1 Christmas Tree

YOU'LL NEED

- 3 batches of **Classic Vanilla Cake Batter** (see below)
 - red and green food colouring
 - 5cm (2in) round cookie cutter
- 3 batches of **Vanilla Bean Buttercream** (see below)
 - 20cm (8in) cake board
 - 3 handfuls of assorted candies
 - 140g (5oz) white compound chocolate
 - about 20 Tic Tacs (a mixture of different bright colours)
 - about 40 Peanut M&M's
 - a small star cookie cutter
- 1 lollipop stick or wooden skewer
- gold sanding sugar

FOR THE CLASSIC VANILLA CAKE BATTER – MAKES ONE BATCH

- 250g (9oz) salted butter, at room temperature
- 225g (8oz) caster sugar
- 3 extra-large free-range eggs, at room temperature
- ½ a vanilla pod (halved crosswise), split lengthwise, or 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 260g (9¼oz) plain flour, sifted
- 3 tsp baking powder
- 110ml (4fl oz) whole milk

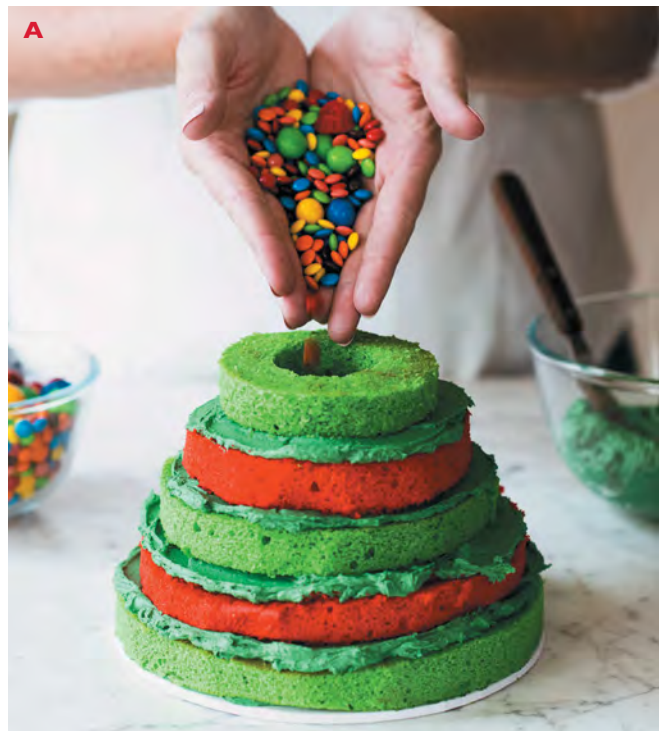
FOR THE VANILLA BEAN BUTTERCREAM – MAKES ONE BATCH

- 225g (8oz) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ½ a vanilla pod, split lengthwise
- 650g (1lb 6oz) icing sugar
- 1-2 tbsp whole milk

- 1 Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 2½. Grease and flour a 23x33cm (9x13in) cake tin and line the bottom with baking parchment.
- 2 You have to bake three cakes, but bake them one at a time, mixing up the batter only when you're ready to bake. For two of the cakes, tint the batter green. For the third cake, tint the batter red.
- 3 In a stand mixer with the whisk or paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar and eggs on high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes.
- 4 Using the tip of a sharp knife, scrape the seeds from the vanilla pod into the mixer bowl (or add the vanilla extract, if using). Add the oil to the creamed mixture and combine.
- 5 In a small bowl, whisk together the flour and baking powder. Add the flour mixture and milk to the creamed mixture and beat on high speed until the flour is completely mixed, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Mix in the food colouring.
- 6 Scrape the batter into the tin and use an offset spatula to smooth the top.
- 7 Bake each cake for 30-40 minutes until the centre springs back when lightly touched.
- 8 Let the cake cool in the tin for 15 minutes, then turn it out onto a wire rack to cool completely. Chill in the fridge for 30 minutes so the cake becomes firm.
- 9 Carve and level the cakes. The cakes must be levelled to ensure even, soft moist cake layers, and even cake colour throughout. Take the cooled cake and use a serrated knife to carve away a



Recipe taken from *Sweet! Celebrations* by Elise Strachan, photography by Lauren Bamford, published by Murdoch Books. (RRP £20).



very thin layer from the base of the cake, removing the browned edges.

- I0** Using a bread knife and a steady hand (or a cake leveller for a precise result), slice the top of the cake flat. Make sure all the cake layers are of even height.
- I1** Using plates, bowls, glasses or round cookie cutters to trace around, cut the following: From the two green cakes, cut out four rounds: 20cm (8in), 15cm (6in), 10cm (4in), and 5cm (2in). Then, from the red cake, cut out four rounds: 18cm (7in), 13cm (5¼in), 7.5cm (3in), and 2.5cm (1in). Take the round cookie cutter and cut a hole through the centres of the 10cm (4in), 13cm (5¼in), 15cm (6in), and 18cm (7in) layers.
- I2** Make the buttercream (following the instructions on page 39). Measure out 1 cup and tint it red. Tint the rest dark green.
- I3** Spread a little green buttercream on the cake board, lay down the 20cm (8in) green cake layer, and spread a layer of buttercream on top.
- I4** Add the 18cm (7in) red layer and repeat, taking care not to frost the inside edges of the centre hole. Continue stacking and frosting gradually smaller cake layers until you reach the 10cm (4in) layer.
- I5** Fill the core of the tree with sweets (Image A), pressing down to compact the treats inside. Frost the top of the 10cm (4in) layer and continue stacking and frosting until all the layers are stacked.

I6 Once stacked, take a serrated knife and gently carve away the sharp edges of the layers to form a tall cone shape. Apply a very thin 'crumb coat' of buttercream all over the outside of the cake (Image B). Set in the fridge for 30 minutes.

I7 Meanwhile, make the 'Christmas lights'. Melt the white chocolate. Cut the coloured Tic Tacs in half crosswise. Use a toothpick dipped in the melted chocolate to attach a Tic Tac to the end of a peanut M&M of the same colour (the M&M is the bulb and the Tic Tac is the base). You will need about 40 of these.

I8 To make the star for the top of the tree, trace around a star cookie cutter onto parchment. Pipe an outline of white melted chocolate, then fill in the shape. Place a lollipop stick in the centre and cover with more melted chocolate. Sprinkle with sanding sugar and let set at room temperature.

I9 Place the green buttercream into a piping bag fitted with a #21 open star tip. Starting at the top of the cake, pipe 2cm (¾in) long strands of buttercream in neat rows around the entire cake, like layers of pine branches on a Christmas tree (Image C).

20 Place the red buttercream into a piping bag fitted with a #21 piping tip and pipe draping lines of 'tinsel' around the cake. Attach the coloured M&M 'lights' directly to the red buttercream (Image D). Work quickly here, as it will start to form a crust, which can make attaching the decorations difficult.

21 Take the star and flip it over. Coat the back with white melted



chocolate and sprinkle with sanding sugar. Allow to set. Insert the lollipop stick into the centre of the top of the tree.

TIP Make the lights and star ahead and store in a container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

FOR THE VANILLA BEAN BUTTERCREAM

- 1 Using an electric mixer; beat the butter on high speed for at least 5 minutes, until the butter has lightened in colour and is thoroughly whipped.
- 2 Using the tip of a sharp knife, scrape the vanilla seeds into the butter and beat to incorporate.

3 Add 1 cup (220g) of the sugar and begin mixing on low speed to combine, then beat on high speed for about 2 minutes.

4 Repeat this process 1 cup at a time until all the sugar has been added. Add milk a dash at a time if the mixture becomes too thick or dry. Scrape down the sides as needed and make sure no sugar is visible.

5 The buttercream will last for 1 month in the freezer; 2 weeks in the fridge and 3 days at room temperature.

TIP This buttercream can be tinted using liquid, gel or paste colouring. You may need to reduce the milk slightly to allow for additional liquid if using liquid colours. Add colour after thinning with milk.



Sweetmince squares

By The National Trust (www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

Makes 15

675g (1lb 8 oz) rich shortcrust pastry (see right)

1½ tsp cornflour

½ tsp custard powder

175ml (6fl oz) water

175g (6oz) mixed currants and raisins

50g (2oz) chopped mixed peel

75g (3oz) granulated sugar

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp mixed spice

½ tsp ground ginger

a little water or milk
caster sugar, for dredging

FOR THE SHORTCRUST PASTRY

a pinch of salt

100g (4oz) butter, softened

100g (4oz) lard or vegetable shortening, softened

3-4 tbsp cold water

- 1 For the pastry, mix together the flour and salt. Cut the fats into small pieces and rub into the flour until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.
- 2 Gradually add enough water, mixing with a fork to give a stiff, but pliable dough. Knead lightly until smooth.
- 3 Wrap in clingfilm or a plastic bag and chill for at least 15 minutes before using.
- 4 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease an 18x27.5cm (7x11in) Swiss roll tin.
- 5 On a lightly floured surface, roll out half the pastry and use it to line the prepared tin.
- 6 Mix together the cornflour and custard powder with the water, then place in a pan with the currants and raisins, mixed peel, granulated sugar, cinnamon, mixed spice and ginger. Bring to the boil and simmer until thick.
- 7 Gently tip the sweetmince mixture into the pastry case and spread evenly with the back of a spoon.
- 8 Roll out the remaining pastry and lay it on top. Dampen the edges of the pastry with a little water or milk and press together well. Bake for 45-50 minutes until golden.
- 9 Remove from the oven and dredge with caster sugar. Allow to cool in the tin. When cold, cut into squares and serve.



Recipe taken from *Cakes, Bakes & Biscuits*, published by National Trust Books. Images by Pavilion Books.

Christmas

DESSERTS



Pecan and salted caramel ice cream

By Caroline Bretherton and Kristan Raines

Serves 4

500ml (16fl oz) double cream

300ml (10fl oz) whole milk

1/8 tsp sea salt flakes

100g (3 1/2oz) caster sugar

50g (1 3/4oz) light brown sugar

7 large free-range egg yolks, beaten

1 tsp pure vanilla extract

85g (3oz) chopped pecans

FOR THE CARAMEL

100g (3 1/2oz) caster sugar

120ml (4fl oz) double cream

15g (1/2oz) unsalted butter

1/2 tsp salt

3/4 tsp vanilla extract

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Ice-cream maker

2.5 ltr (4 1/2pt) shallow, freezer-proof lidded airtight container

- 1 Prepare an ice-cream maker as per the instructions. For the caramel, boil the caster sugar and 2 tbsp water in a saucepan over a medium-high heat, brushing down the sides of the pan with a damp pastry brush. Cook the sugar for 5 minutes, swirling the pan to ensure that it cooks evenly. Remove from the heat.
- 2 Gradually add the remaining caramel ingredients, stirring with a wooden spoon. Melt again over a medium-low heat. Transfer to a bowl and leave to cool. Heat the cream, milk, salt and both lots of sugar in a saucepan over a low heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves.
- 3 In a bowl, whisk a little of the cream mixture into the beaten yolks, until combined. Whisk in the rest of the cream mixture. Transfer the custard to a clean pan. Cook over a medium-low heat until it is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Remove and stir in the vanilla extract.
- 4 Strain the custard into a bowl set over an ice bath. Leave to cool completely. Cover with clingfilm and chill for 1-2 hours. Pour into the ice-cream maker and churn, adding the pecans at the halfway mark, until thick.
- 5 Pour half of the ice cream into an airtight container, followed by half the caramel. Repeat with the remaining ice cream and caramel, creating a swirl effect with a knife. Cover and freeze for 4-5 hours, until firm. Remove from the freezer 20 minutes before serving. You can store the ice cream for 1-2 months in the freezer.





Coffee semi freddo

By Caroline Bretherton and Kristan Raines

Serves 8

4 free-range eggs, separated

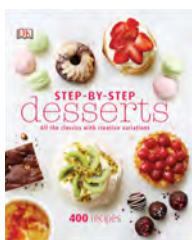
200g (7oz) caster sugar

2 tbsp instant coffee powder, plus extra for dusting

300ml (10fl oz) double cream, whipped to soft peaks

25g (1oz) good quality dark chocolate

- 1** Line a 900g (2lb) loaf tin with clingfilm and set aside. Place the egg yolks and 50g (1¾oz) sugar in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, making sure it does not touch the water.
- 2** Whisk the mixture with a hand-held whisk for 5 minutes, until it is pale, light and has tripled in volume.
- 3** Combine the coffee powder with 2 tbsp boiling water in a cup. Gradually whisk the coffee mixture into the egg yolk mixture. Remove from the heat and whisk for 3-5 minutes until cool.
- 4** Whisk the egg whites and remaining caster sugar in a separate heatproof bowl over the pan of simmering water to form stiff peaks. Remove from the heat and whisk for a further 3-5 minutes until it cools. Fold a little of the meringue into the coffee mixture.
- 5** Carefully fold the remaining meringue into the coffee mixture, so that you lose as little air as possible, until combined. Gently fold in the whipped cream and pour the mixture into the tin. Cover with clingfilm and freeze for 4-6 hours.
- 6** Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Invert the semi freddo onto a plate, discarding both sheets of clingfilm. Dust with coffee powder, decorate with the melted chocolate, then serve. You can store it, covered in the freezer, for up to 1 month.



The recipes on pages 42-43 and the bread and butter pudding on page 44 are taken from *Step-By-Step Desserts* by Caroline Bretherton and Kristan Raines. Published by DK. (RRP £20).



Briôche bread and butter pudding

By Caroline Bretherton and Kristan Raines

Serves 4-6

unsalted butter, for greasing

250g (9oz) briôche, cut into 2.5cm (1in) cubes

2 free-range eggs

50g (1¾oz) caster sugar

200ml (7fl oz) whole milk

200ml (7fl oz) double cream

icing sugar, for dusting

chocolate ice cream, to serve (optional)

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

20x25cm (8x10in) ovenproof dish

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease the ovenproof dish. Spread out the briôche pieces in the dish, pressing down gently to form an even layer.
- 2 Place the eggs and caster sugar in a bowl and whisk to combine. Add the milk and cream, a little at a time, whisking constantly to combine.
- 3 Pour the mixture over the briôche, pushing down to help the liquid to absorb. Rest for 5 minutes. Place the dish in a large roasting tin. Pour hot water into the tin.
- 4 Bake for 40-45 minutes, until golden brown. Lift the dish out of the tin and leave to cool slightly. Dust with icing sugar. Serve with chocolate ice cream, if desired. You can store the pudding, covered in the fridge, for up to 2 days.



Baileys crème brûlée

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Serves 6

600ml (21fl oz) double cream

200ml (7fl oz) semi-skimmed milk

6 medium Waitrose British Blacktail Free-Range Egg yolks

30g (1oz) caster sugar

4 tbsp Baileys Irish Cream

3 tbsp demerara sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 150°C/Gas Mark 2. Pour the cream and milk into a saucepan and heat until almost boiling. Remove from the heat and set aside for 10 minutes.
- 2 In a heatproof bowl, whisk the egg yolks and sugar together with a balloon whisk until combined. Stir in the cream mixture and Baileys and pour into six small ramekins.
- 3 Put the ramekins in a roasting tin and add enough cold water to the tin to come two-thirds of the way up the sides of the ramekins. Carefully put the roasting tin in the oven and bake for 30-40 minutes, or until just set. Remove from the tin and leave to cool, then chill for 2 hours.
- 4 Preheat the grill to hot. Sprinkle the demerara sugar in an even layer over the brûlées and grill for about 2 minutes until the sugar has melted. Leave to cool until the sugar has set, then serve straight away.

Clementine and ginger trifle

By Gizzi Erskine

Serves 8

100ml (3½fl oz) ginger liqueur
600ml (20fl oz) fresh custard
300ml (10fl oz) double cream
1 tsp icing sugar
50g (1¾ oz) good-quality dark chocolate
a few glacé cherries, chopped

FOR THE GINGER CAKE

225g (8oz) unsalted butter, plus extra for buttering
225g (8oz) dark brown sugar
225g (8oz) black treacle

2 free-range eggs, beaten
290ml (9¾fl oz) milk
340g (11¾oz) plain flour
1 tbsp ground ginger
1 tbsp ground cinnamon
a small fresh grating of nutmeg
2 tsp bicarbonate of soda

FOR THE CLEMENTINE JELLY

150ml (5fl oz) water
50g (1¾ oz) caster sugar
300ml (10fl oz) clementine juice
4 gelatine leaves
3 clementines, segmented

- 1 For the ginger cake, preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Butter and line a 30x20cm (12x8in) roasting tin. Melt the butter, sugar and treacle together in a pan, then leave to cool for 10 minutes. Stir in the eggs and milk. Sift the flour, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and bicarbonate of soda together in a large mixing bowl, then fold in the butter mixture to form a batter. Pour into the tin and bake for 45 minutes, or until the cake is risen and firm. Leave to cool on a wire rack and store in an airtight container until needed. You will have made too much cake, but it freezes brilliantly and gets better with age.
- 2 For the clementine jelly, put the water, sugar and clementine juice into a small saucepan. Soak the gelatine leaves in cold water for 10 minutes, then squeeze out any water with your hands and add to the clementine juice to dissolve. Arrange the clementine segments in the bottom of a trifle bowl, pour over the liquid and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, to set.
- 3 To construct the trifle, chop up 150g (5½oz) cake and place on top of the jelly. Pour over the ginger liqueur. Pour over the custard and level out the top. Whisk the cream with the icing sugar until it's gently holding its shape, then spoon over the custard. Grate over the chocolate and finish with glacé cherries if desired. Pop the trifle into the fridge to chill for 1 hour before serving.



Recipe taken from *Gizzi's Season's Eatings: Feasts & Celebrations from Halloween to Happy New Year* by Gizzi Erskine, published by Mitchell Beazley, (RRP £25).

Profiteroles with chantilly cream

By Bill McCarrick

FOR THE PROFITEROLES

70g (2½oz) strong white flour

150ml (5fl oz) whole milk

70g (2½oz) salted butter

3 free-range eggs

FOR THE CHANTILLY CREAM

200ml (7fl oz) whipping cream

30g (1oz) icing sugar

1 tbsp vanilla extract

FOR THE CHOCOLATE SAUCE

90ml (3fl oz) whole milk

90g (3¼oz) good-quality dark chocolate, at least 70% cocoa, roughly chopped

30g (1oz) unsalted butter, softened

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

a piping bag fitted with a 5mm (¼in) star nozzle

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Line a large baking sheet with baking parchment. Sift the flour into a large bowl, holding the sieve high to help aerate it.
- 2 Heat the milk and butter in a medium saucepan over a medium heat until just starting to boil. Add the flour to the pan and bring to the boil, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon.
- 3 After 1 minute, remove the pan from the heat and transfer the mixture to a heatproof bowl. Whisk the mixture with a hand-held electric whisk on a medium speed for 2 minutes.
- 4 Gradually add the eggs to the mixture while the whisk is running. Scrape down the sides of the bowl using a silicone spatula to avoid lumps forming.
- 5 Whisk until all the eggs have been added and the mixture is fully combined. Scoop 24 walnut-sized balls of the batter onto the baking sheet. Bake for 15-20 minutes, until risen, golden and crisp.
- 6 Remove the choux buns from the oven, prick each one in the side, then return to the oven for a further 5 minutes. Allow to cool completely on a wire rack. Once cool, use a knife to make a small hole in the side of each bun.
- 7 For the Chantilly cream, whisk the cream, icing sugar and vanilla extract together in a large bowl, until the mixture forms soft peaks. Set aside.
- 8 For the chocolate sauce, gently heat the milk in a saucepan, before adding the dark chocolate and butter. Stir over a medium-low heat until combined.
- 9 Spoon the Chantilly cream into a piping bag and pipe it into the buns. Serve immediately with the chocolate sauce poured over the top.



Recipe taken from *Chocolate* by Dom Ramsey, published by DK. (RRP £14.99).



Cranberry meringue roulade with Cointreau orange cream

By Berry World (www.berryworld.com)

Serves 8

FOR THE MERINGUE

5 free-range eggs whites

275g (10oz) caster sugar

50g (1¾oz) flaked almonds

FOR THE FILLING

250g (9oz) fresh cranberries

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

finely grated zest and juice of ½ an orange

300ml (10½fl oz) double cream

3 tbsp Cointreau

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Line a 35x23cm (13½x9in) Swiss roll tin with lightly greased baking parchment.
- 2 Whisk the egg whites until very stiff, then gradually add the sugar. Spread the meringue into the tin and sprinkle with flaked almonds.
- 3 Bake in the oven for 10 minutes, then reduce the heat to 160°C/Gas Mark 3 and continue to cook for a further 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and turn almond-side down onto a sheet of baking parchment. Allow to cool.
- 4 For the filling, place the cranberries in a saucepan with the sugar, orange juice and zest and simmer until softened and syrupy. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.
- 5 When ready to assemble, whisk together the cream and the Cointreau until the mixture stands in soft peaks. Spread the cool cranberry mixture evenly over the roulade, then spread the cream over. Roll up from the long end fairly tightly; don't worry if it cracks a little. Place on a serving plate and chill before serving.

TIP For that extra wow factor, decorate with chocolate holly leaves and delicious crystallised fresh cranberries. For the holly leaves, paint melted chocolate onto the back of clean holly or bay leaves, allow to set in the fridge, repeat with another layer of chocolate and set again. Carefully peel off. To make crystallised cranberries, soak fresh uncooked cranberries in a sugar syrup, roll in caster sugar and allow to dry for a few hours.





Strawberry and rhubarb crumble

By Berry World (www.berryworld.com)

Serves 6

- 500g (1lb 1oz) rhubarb**
- 100ml (3½fl oz) water**
- 100g (3½oz) golden caster sugar**
- 1 tbsp ginger wine**
- 250g (9oz) strawberries**
- 75g (2¾oz) butter**
- 175g (6oz) self-raising flour**
- ½ tsp ground ginger**
- 60g (2oz) demerara sugar**
- 1 Crunchie bar, crushed**

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2** Trim and cut the rhubarb and place half of it in a saucepan with the golden caster sugar, the water and the ginger wine. Simmer gently until syrupy.
- 3** Halve the strawberries, then place with the rhubarb syrup into a baking dish.
- 4** For the crumble, put the butter and flour into a bowl and rub with your fingers until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar, ginger and the crushed Crunchie bar and sprinkle generously over the fruit.
- 5** Bake in the oven for 30 minutes until golden and bubbling.



Baileys® and chocolate mini cheesecakes

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 12

- 100g (3½oz) butter, plus extra to grease**
- 250g (9oz) digestive biscuits, crushed**
- 600g (1lb 6oz) soft cream cheese**
- 25ml (1fl oz) Baileys®**
- 100g (3½oz) icing sugar**
- 300ml (10fl oz) double cream, whipped**
- 100g (3½oz) good quality dark chocolate, coarsely grated**
- 100g (3½oz) dark chocolate, roughly chopped**

- 1** Grease the holes of a sandwich tin or a 12-hole muffin tin with a little butter.
- 2** Melt the butter in a pan, add the crushed biscuits and mix until the biscuits have absorbed all the butter. Remove from the heat, divide the mixture equally between the 12 holes and press firmly into place. Place in the refrigerator and allow to set for 1 hour.
- 3** Lightly whip the cream cheese, then beat in the Irish cream liqueur and icing sugar. Fold in the whipped cream and half the grated chocolate. When smooth, spoon evenly onto the biscuit bases. Refrigerate and allow to set for at least 2 hours.
- 4** Once set, carefully remove by running a knife dipped in hot water around the edge of each cheesecake and gently pushing up the bases. Just before serving, sprinkle the remaining grated chocolate and the chopped chocolate over each cheesecake.



Recipe taken from *Polska* by Zuzanna Zak, published by Quadrille. (RRP £25).

Boozy chocolate and walnut torte

By Zuzanna Zak
Serves 12-16

FOR THE CAKE

- 1 tbsp dried breadcrumbs
- 8 free-range eggs, separated
- 250g (9oz) icing sugar
- 250g (9oz) plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE CHOCOLATE ICING

- 2 free-range egg yolks
- 100g (3½oz) icing sugar
- 200g (7oz) unsalted butter, softened
- 50g (1¾oz) cocoa powder, blended to a paste with 5 tbsp boiled water
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE WALNUT CREAM

- 100ml (3½fl oz) whipping cream
- 200g (7oz) icing sugar
- 200g (7oz) walnuts, ground

FOR THE SYRUP

- 75ml (2½ fl oz) very strong tea with 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 75ml (2½fl oz) dark rum

TO DECORATE

- 100g (3½oz) walnuts, some crushed, some left whole
- 100g (3½oz) flaked almonds

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and grease a loose-bottomed 23x23cm (9x9in) round cake tin. Sprinkle the inside of the tin with the breadcrumbs.
- 2 For the cake, whisk the egg whites in a bowl until stiff peaks form. Gradually add the icing sugar and whisk until combined and considerably thicker. Add the egg yolks and whisk again. Gently fold in the flour, baking powder, cocoa powder and vanilla extract, mixing gently, then pour in the cake tin. Bake in the oven for 50 minutes, or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for a few minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.
- 3 Meanwhile, make the icing by blending the egg yolks and sugar together, then adding the butter, a little at a time, and finally the chocolate paste and vanilla. Place in the fridge for 20 minutes.
- 4 For the walnut cream filling, whip the cream to soft peaks, then gradually add the sugar and keep whisking until you have stiff peaks. Fold in the finely ground walnuts. Using a bread knife, carefully slice the cake horizontally into three equal layers (don't attempt this while the cake is still warm as it will be too crumbly). Add the rum to the cooled, sweet tea, then use this syrup to thoroughly soak the first sponge layer. Spread about half of the walnut cream filling over the top, then repeat with the next layer of sponge, soaking with syrup and spreading with the remaining walnut cream.
- 5 Smear the chocolate icing over the top of the final layer and down the sides to cover the entire cake, as thick as you like. Decorate the sides of the cake with walnuts and almonds.



Bûche de Noël

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 1

FOR THE CAKE

4 free-range eggs

100g (3½oz) caster sugar

75g (2¾oz) self-raising flour

25g (1oz) cocoa powder

FOR THE FILLING

300ml (10fl oz) double cream

2 tbsp icing sugar

2 tbsp Grand Marnier

300g (10½oz) tinned mandarin segments, drained, or 4 mandarins, peeled and segmented

TO DECORATE

300g (10½oz) dark chocolate, chopped

280ml (6fl oz) double cream

Edible Silk Metallic Gold Treasure

White Chocolate Writer Decorating Tube

- 1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease and line a Swiss roll tin with baking parchment.
- 2** In a large bowl, whisk the eggs and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Sift the flour and cocoa into the bowl and gently fold in using a metal spoon.
- 3** Spoon the mixture into the tin and spread evenly. Bake for 8-10 minutes until just firm to the touch, then remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin on a wire rack.
- 4** For the filling, add the cream and icing sugar to a large bowl and whisk until soft peaks form. Fold in the Grand Marnier and mandarins. Cover and chill until needed.
- 5** When the sponge is cool, turn it out onto a sheet of baking parchment and carefully peel away the lining parchment. Trim the sponge to the size of a Lakeland Yule Log Mould liner and put the leftover pieces to one side.
- 6** Place the liner into the mould then line it with the trimmed sponge. Spoon in the filling, levelling it out to just below the top of the mould. Fully cover the filling by placing the leftover pieces of sponge over the top, then place in the fridge.
- 7** To decorate, melt 100g (3½oz) chocolate and, using a Lakeland Silicone Chocolate Box Shapes mould, fill the 5 round moulds, then leave to set.
- 8** For the ganache coating, heat the cream in a saucepan over a medium heat until simmering. Remove from the heat, add the remaining chocolate and stir until melted and smooth. Allow to cool slightly until the mixture coats the back of a metal spoon.
- 9** Place a serving plate over the top of the filled mould then, holding both securely, flip them over to turn the yule log out onto the plate. Coat with the ganache and leave to set.
- 10** Meanwhile, remove the chocolates from the mould and dust with Edible Silk Metallic Gold Treasure. Once the ganache has set, drizzle the yule log with the White Chocolate Writer Decorating Tube and top with the gold-dusted chocolates.





Recipe taken from
*Recipes from my
 Gluten-Free Kitchen*
 by Denise O'
 Callaghan, published
 by Mercier Press.

Gluten-free Christmas pudding

By Denise O'Callaghan

Makes 12

FOR THE MERINGUE

75g (3oz) Denise's
 Delicious Flour blend,
 see right
 ½ tsp xanthan gum
 100g (4oz) gluten-free
 breadcrumbs
 1 tsp allspice
 1 tsp cinnamon
 150g (6oz) brown sugar
 300g (12oz) raisins
 2 tbsp gravy browning
 100g (4oz) currants
 150g (6oz) sultanas

25g (1oz) nibbed almonds
 2 eating apples, cored,
 peeled, chopped
 grated zest and juice
 of 1 orange
 3 free-range eggs
 4 tbsp rum

FOR THE FLOUR

250g (9oz) rice flour
 25g (1oz) tapioca flour
 275g (11oz) potato flour
 275g (11oz) cornflour
 13g (½oz) teff flour
 1 tsp gluten-free
 baking powder
 1 tsp guar gum

- 1 For the flour blend, sieve all the ingredients into a bowl and mix well. Line 12 mini pudding basins with greaseproof paper.
- 2 Put the flour, gum, breadcrumbs, spices and sugar into a bowl, one at a time, mixing each ingredient thoroughly before adding the next. Gradually mix in all the dried fruit and nuts, then add the apple and lemon zest.
- 3 In a different bowl, beat the eggs and mix in the rum, gravy browning (to give a nice rich colour) and orange juice. Add to the dry ingredients, then stir very hard. You may need a little more egg – the mixture should be a dropping consistency.
- 4 Cover with a cloth and leave it overnight. The next day, mix thoroughly again. Grease the pudding basins, then divide the mixture between them.
- 5 Steam the pudding gently in a saucepan for 2½ hours, watching the water to make sure it doesn't boil away. If you have pudding bowls with snap on lids, it is very easy to pop them off to make sure that they are fully baked by inserting a skewer, which should come out clean. If not fully steamed, return to the heat.
- 6 When cooked and cooled, remove the greaseproof paper and replace with fresh greaseproof paper.
- 7 Store in a cool dry place for up to 1 year. When ready to eat, steam for 2 hours to heat through.



Chocolate-cinnamon caramels

By Kathryn Gordon and Anne E. McBride

Makes 36

360g (12oz) heavy whipping cream

8 cinnamon sticks

165g (5¾oz) honey

100g (3½oz) granulated sugar

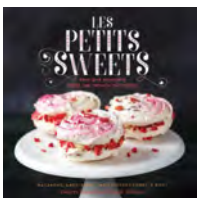
50g (1¾oz) semi-sweet chocolate, finely chopped

1 tsp vanilla extract

¼ tsp fine sea salt

vegetable oil cooking spray

- 1** Place the cream and cinnamon sticks in a medium saucepan over a medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and let the mixture steep for 30 minutes, then remove the cinnamon sticks. Gently whisk in the honey and sugar until combined, then place the pan back on the hob over a medium heat. Stir the mixture in a figure-eight motion until everything is dissolved, making sure to stay about 1.25cm (½in) away from the sides of the pan. When the mixture comes to a boil, stop stirring and clean the sides of the pan.
- 2** Fill a small bowl with ice water.
- 3** Clip a sugar thermometer to the pan, and continue cooking the mixture, stirring constantly all around the pan with a spatula, until it reaches 118°C/ 244°F. Drop a small amount into the ice water; it should hold a firm ball after it cools for 20 seconds. Remove from the heat and add the chocolate, vanilla and salt, shaking the pan so that the chocolate is submerged. Let it sit for 1 minute, then whisk from the centre outward until the mixture is thoroughly combined and shiny.
- 4** Spray a 20cm (8in) square pan with vegetable oil cooking spray. Pour the caramel in the pan and let it cool and set for 2 hours.
- 5** Once set, unmould the caramel onto a cutting board and cut into 3cm (1¼in) squares. Serve at room temperature. The caramels can be individually wrapped in cellophane or waxed paper and stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.



Recipe taken from *Les Petits Sweets: Two-Bite Desserts from the French Patisserie* by Kathryn Gordon and Anne E. McBride, published by Running Press. (RRP £11.99).



Recipe taken from
Alternative Baker by
 Alanna Taylor-Tobin,
 published by Page
 Street Publishing.
 (RRP \$24.99).

Boozy chocolate cherry teff pots

By Alanna Taylor-Tobin
Makes 8

**560g (1lb 3oz) fresh sweet cherries,
 stemmed, pitted, halved**
60ml (2fl oz) bourbon or whiskey
4 tbsp unsalted butter
**145g (5oz) bittersweet chocolate,
 coarsely chopped**
3 large free-range eggs
100g (3½oz) granulated sugar
½ tsp fine sea salt
40g (1½oz) teff flour
120ml (4fl oz) double cream
1 tsp vanilla extract
icing sugar, for dusting

- 1** Position a rack in the centre of the oven and preheat to 165°C/ Gas Mark 3. Place eight ramekins on a baking sheet.
- 2** Combine the cherries and the bourbon in a bowl and allow to macerate for at least 20 minutes and up to several hours, tossing occasionally.
- 3** Meanwhile, combine the butter and chocolate in a small saucepan and place over the lowest possible heat, stirring constantly until the mixture is melted and smooth. Set aside to cool slightly.
- 4** In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine the eggs, sugar and salt. Whip on high speed until the mixture has tripled in volume. Reduce the speed to low and slowly sprinkle in the teff flour, mixing until just combined. Pour the melted chocolate mixture into the bowl, mixing until just combined, then add the cream and vanilla. Drain the cherries, reserving their bourbon juices, and add the juices to the filling mixture. Remove from the mixer and fold with a spatula to make sure it is well combined.
- 5** Place the soaked cherries in the bottom of the ramekins and pour the filling over the top, dividing it evenly. Bake the pots for about 30-35 minutes until puffed and cracked and a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out with wet crumbs.
- 6** Allow to cool for at least 30 minutes. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm or at room temperature.



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TREATS





Jam drops

By Anneka Manning

Makes about 22

125g (4½oz) butter, at room temperature, cubed

75g (2½oz) caster sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

185g (6½oz) plain flour

35g (1¼oz) custard powder

½ tsp baking powder

2 tbsp milk

85g (3oz) raspberry jam, or jam of your choice

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line two large baking trays with baking paper.
- 2 Use an electric mixer to beat the butter, sugar and vanilla in a medium bowl until pale and creamy. Sift together the flour, custard powder and baking powder. Add to the butter mixture with the milk and beat until a soft dough just forms.
- 3 Roll tablespoonfuls of the biscuit dough into balls and place them about 5cm (2in) apart on the trays. Flatten each ball to about 1cm (½in) thick and 4cm (1½in) in diameter. Make a 2cm (¾in) diameter indent in the centre of each biscuit. Fill each indent with about ½ tsp jam.
- 4 Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, swapping the trays around halfway through baking, or until the biscuits are lightly golden and cooked through. Leave to cool on the baking trays.



Recipe taken from *BakeClass* by Anneka Manning, published by Murdoch Books. (RRP £20).



Christmas tree light cookies

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 12

FOR THE COOKIES

240g (8½oz) butter, softened, plus extra for greasing

300g (10½oz) sugar

1 free-range egg, beaten

1½ tsp vanilla extract

½ tsp almond extract

300g (10½oz) plain flour, sifted

1 tsp salt

TO DECORATE

candy melts

coloured icing

strawberry laces

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease a Christmas Tree Light Cookie Tin tin with butter.
- 2 In a mixing bowl, cream together the butter and sugar with an electric hand mixer, then beat in the egg and extracts.
- 3 Fold in the sifted flour and salt. Spoon the dough into the tin until the moulds are two-thirds full. Bake for 7-8 minutes until the cookies are lightly browned at the edges.
- 4 Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 You can really go to town decorating these Christmas tree light cookies with your choice of candy melts and coloured icing.
- 6 To create a string of lights, arrange the strawberry laces on a platter, then add the finished cookies on top.



Ovis Mollis cookies

By Melissa Forti

Makes 25-30

- 100g (3½oz) cornflour**
- 200g (7oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting**
- 200g (7oz) butter, chilled, diced**
- 100g (3½oz) caster sugar**
- 5 hard-boiled free-range egg yolks**
- 1 tsp almond oil or extract**
- 1½ tsp vanilla extract**
- icing sugar, for dusting**

- 1** Put both flours into a food processor and pulse to mix. Add the diced butter and pulse again until the mixture resembles fine crumbs. Add the sugar and pulse again. Finally, add the egg yolks, almond oil and vanilla and pulse until the mixture forms a dough; don't worry if the mixture looks dry at first, just keep the machine running for a little longer.
- 2** Transfer the dough to a work surface and form it into a ball. Wrap in clingfilm and leave to rest in a cool place (not in the fridge) for about 1 hour.
- 3** Preheat the oven to 160°C/Gas Mark 2½ and line a large baking sheet with baking parchment.
- 4** Sprinkle a little flour on the work surface and roll out the dough to 5mm (¼in) thick. Traditionally, a ring cookie cutter with a hole in the middle is used, but choose a medium cutter you like and stamp out cookies from the dough. Place on the baking sheet, spacing them slightly apart, and bake for about 10 minutes or until lightly golden (take care not to over-bake).
- 5** Remove from the oven and allow to cool on the baking sheet. When completely cool, dust with a generous amount of icing sugar.



This recipe and the snowballs on page 64 are taken from *The Italian Baker* by Melissa Forti, photography by Danny Bernardini, published by Quadrille. (RRP £20).



Winter snowball cookies

By Melissa Forti

Makes 24

230g (8oz) butter, at room temperature

110g (4oz) icing sugar

¼ tsp salt

2 tsp vanilla extract

3 tbsp cornflour

280g (10oz) plain flour

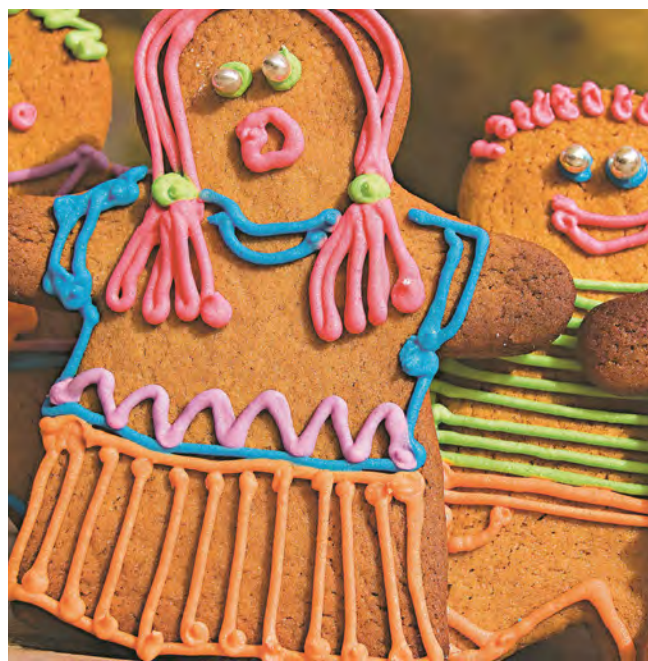
1 tbsp cocoa powder

75g (3oz) ground almonds

TO DECORATE

320g (11oz) icing sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.
- 2 In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, mix the butter on a medium speed until creamy. (Alternatively, use a mixing bowl and a wooden spoon.) Add the icing sugar and salt, mix in the vanilla, sprinkle in the cornflour and, with the mixer on a low speed, slowly add in the flour and cocoa powder and mix just until combined. Finally, stir in the ground almonds.
- 3 Scoop the dough out, one tablespoon at a time, and roll into a ball. Place the balls on the baking sheet. Bake in the oven for 16-18 minutes, until the bottom edges are lightly golden.
- 4 Remove from the oven and allow to cool for several minutes. While they are still warm, tip the icing sugar into a bowl and roll the cookies in it to coat. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Once completely cool, roll the balls in the icing sugar once more, this time to generously coat, pressing the icing sugar on a little.



Gingerbread playground

By The National Trust (www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

Makes 12

350g (12oz) plain flour

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

2 tsp ground ginger

100g (4oz) butter

175g (6oz) soft light brown sugar

1 large free-range egg

4 tbsp golden syrup

4 tbsp royal icing

food colouring gels

silver dragées

- 1 Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ginger into a large bowl. Add the butter and rub it in with your fingertips until you have a mixture resembling fine breadcrumbs. Add the sugar and mix.
- 2 In another bowl, beat the egg and golden syrup together. Tip the mixture over the flour and stir well. Keep sprinkling over flour and working it in until you have a lovely smooth dough. Wrap the dough in clingfilm and leave to chill in the fridge for at least 30 minutes, but 1 hour would be better.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5 and line two baking sheets with baking parchment.
- 4 Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface 5mm (¼in) thick. Cut out the required shapes, place them slightly apart on the baking sheets and bake for 12-15 minutes until golden.
- 5 Remove from the oven and leave to cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 6 To decorate, divide the royal icing into as many colours as you want and tint with the gels. Place each coloured royal icing in a separate icing bag and decorate to your heart's content. Create two dots for eyes and place the silver dragées on top. Let the biscuits dry before serving.

Peppermint stick muffins

By The National Trust (www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

Makes 12

- 300g (10oz) self-raising flour**
- 1 tsp baking powder**
- 75g (3oz) caster sugar**
- 2 x 40g (1½oz) packets of extra strong mints**
- 2 large free-range eggs, beaten**
- 225ml (8fl oz) milk**
- 75g (3oz) butter, melted**

TO DECORATE

- 3 x 75g (3oz) sticks of peppermint candy cane or rock**
- 200g (7oz) icing sugar, sifted**
- 2 tbsp lemon juice**
- food colouring (optional)**
- candy cane or rock, to decorate**

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Grease and line a 12-hole muffin tin or individual muffin moulds.
- 2 Combine the flour, baking powder and caster sugar, then sift into a bowl. Put the mints in a mortar and pound with a pestle to break them up into small pieces. Scatter them over the flour.
- 3 In a separate bowl or jug, lightly beat together the eggs and milk to combine, then stir in the butter. Pour into the dry ingredients and stir together until just combined, then spoon the batter into the muffin tin.
- 4 Bake for about 20 minutes until risen and golden. Leave to cool in the tin for a few minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
- 5 To decorate, put the candy cane or rock in a plastic bag and tap with a rolling pin to break into pieces. Set aside. Stir together the icing sugar and lemon juice until smooth, then add a few drops of food colouring to tint the icing, if desired. Spoon on top of the muffins and sprinkle pieces of candy cane or rock on top.



This recipe and the gingerbread playground on page 64 are taken from *Cakes, Bakes & Biscuits*, published by National Trust Books, photography by Pavillion Books,

Glowing candy cottage

By Elise Strachan

Makes 1 cottage

2 milk chocolate bars, at room temperature

2 Kit Kat bars (4-finger size)

100g (3½oz) milk chocolate

christmas-themed sprinkles: gingerbread men, holly leaves and berries, candy canes

1 battery-operated tealight candle

4 mini candy canes

- 1 Warm a sharp knife in hot water before cutting four pieces, each 5x6cm (2x2½in) out of the chocolate bars (just under half a bar each). From one piece, cut out a 2.5x4cm (1x2in) door.
- 2 Cut one of the Kit Kat bars in half crosswise and set aside for making the roof. Refrigerate all the chocolate pieces for 15 minutes.
- 3 Melt the milk chocolate and place in a zip-seal bag. Cut off a very small corner.
- 4 Position a whole Kit Kat bar so a narrow side is facing you. Pipe a line of melted chocolate down the long side of one of the chocolate pieces and stick it on top of the Kit Kat bar at the very back, with the chocolate 'bricks' facing outwards.
- 5 Once set, take a second piece of chocolate and pipe a line of melted chocolate along the long side and up the short side. Place the chocolate piece on top of the Kit Kat bar along one side, meeting the back wall. Repeat with the third piece of Hershey's on the opposite side. Pipe a line of melted chocolate along the front edge of both side walls and attach the front piece with the door shape cut out. Decorate the porch and above the door with sprinkles.
- 6 Turn on the tea light candle and place it inside the structure.
- 7 To make the roof, pipe a line of melted chocolate along the top edge of the two side walls and angle the Kit Kat pieces so the cut edges meet in the middle. Pipe a line of melted chocolate along the join of the Kit Kat bars and fill with holly and berry sprinkles. Snap the curved edges off four candy canes and use the melted chocolate to affix candy cane borders to the roofline, front and back.



Recipe taken from *Sweet! Celebrations* by Elise Strachan, photography by Lauren Bamford, published by Murdoch Books. (RRP£20).



Red velvet angel cupcakes

By Amy-Beth Ellice
Makes 12

FOR THE CUPCAKES

- 200g (7oz) plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tbsp cocoa powder
- 100g (3½oz) butter
- 175g (6oz) caster sugar
- 1 free-range egg, beaten
- 2 tsp red paste food colouring
- 25g (1oz) dark chocolate, melted
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 120ml (4fl oz) buttermilk

2 tbsp vegetable oil

FOR THE FROSTING

- 75g (3oz) butter
- 225g (8oz) cream cheese
- 175g (6oz) icing sugar, sifted

TO DECORATE

- white fondant icing
- a small amount of mincemeat or jam
- angel mould
- edible metallic gold paint
- fine decorating brush

- 1 Dust a work surface with icing sugar and lightly knead the icing until softened slightly. Roll out the fondant icing quite thinly. Using a round cutter that fits the cupcakes, cut out discs of fondant icing. Make 12, then set aside to dry.
- 2 For the angels, push a small amount of white fondant icing into the mould. When you have made 12 angels, use a decorating brush to paint them with edible gold paint. Leave to dry.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and line a 12-hole muffin tin with gold foil muffin cases.
- 4 Sift together the flour, baking powder and cocoa powder into a mixing bowl.
- 5 Melt the dark chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water.
- 6 Beat together the butter and sugar in the bowl of a free-standing electric mixer (or you can use a handheld electric whisk and mixing bowl) until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the egg and slowly mix in the food colouring. Add the melted chocolate, vanilla extract, oil and vinegar on a low speed.
- 7 Gently fold in half of the sifted dry ingredients with a large metal spoon followed by half of the buttermilk. Repeat this process with the remaining dry ingredients and buttermilk.
- 8 Divide the mixture evenly between the cases. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes until well risen and a skewer inserted into one of the cakes comes out clean. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.
- 9 While the cakes are cooling, make the cream cheese frosting. Beat the butter and cream cheese together the bowl of a mixer. On a low speed, add the icing sugar in two additions until soft and creamy.
- 10 Spread a little mincemeat or jam onto each cupcake and place a fondant disc on top. Spoon the cream cheese frosting into a piping bag fitted with a star nozzle and pipe a small swirl in the middle of each cupcake on top of the disc. Place an angel on top of the 'clouds' of cream cheese frosting.



Vegan chunky monkey ice cream

By Georgina Young (www.greensofthestoneage.com)

Serves 4

FOR THE CUPCAKES

400ml (14fl oz) full-fat coconut milk

50g (1¾oz) cacao butter

60ml (2fl oz) maple syrup

¼ tsp vanilla powder

**1 large banana, peeled
juice of ½ a lemon**

¼ tsp fine Himalayan pink salt

¼ tsp ground turmeric

¼ tsp xanthan gum

70g (2¼oz) toasted pecans or walnuts

60g (2oz) vegan dark chocolate

- 1** Place the coconut milk, cacao butter, maple syrup and vanilla powder into a heavy bottomed pan. Gently whisk the ingredients and place onto a medium heat until almost at boiling point. Reduce to a low heat and simmer gently for 30 minutes, until the mixture has thickened enough to evenly coat the back of a spoon. Leave the mixture to cool for 5 minutes, before placing into the freezer for a further 10-15 minutes to cool completely.
- 2** In the bowl of a food processor, combine the banana and lemon juice. Process until smooth. Remove the cooled ice cream base from the freezer and begin to pour down your feed tube while the processor is running. Add the salt, turmeric and xanthan gum. Process until all of the ingredients have fully combined. You may want to periodically scrape down the sides with a silicone spatula.
- 3** Place the mixture into the freezer and stir every 15 minutes, until it has cooled completely.
- 4** While you are waiting, cut the chocolate into chips and chop the toasted nuts. Remove the mixture and stir in the chocolate chips and nuts.
- 5** Cover the bowl with clingfilm to prevent ice crystals from forming, then place the mixture back into the freezer. Stir every 15 minutes for 1 hour; until the ice-cream becomes slightly more firm than the texture of soft scoop.



Recipe taken from *Eat Smart: what to eat in a day – every day*, by Niomi Smart, published by HarperCollins. (RRP £20).

Chocolate cupcakes

By Niomi Smart

Makes 12

260g (9¼oz) brown rice flour

60g (2oz) raw cacao powder

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 tsp baking powder

250g (9oz) plain coconut yoghurt

100g (3½oz) coconut sugar

180ml (6fl oz) unsweetened almond milk

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 tsp apple cider vinegar

FOR THE COCONUT CREAM FROSTING

400g (14oz) tinned coconut milk, refrigerated

2 tbsp raw cacao powder, plus extra for dusting

2 tbsp maple syrup

½ tsp vanilla extract

½ tsp arrowroot powder

2 tbsp raw cacao nibs, to decorate

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and line a muffin tin with 12 paper cupcake cases.
- 2 Mix the rice flour, cacao powder, bicarbonate of soda and baking powder together in a bowl and set aside.

- 3 In a separate large bowl, use an electric hand whisk to whip the coconut yoghurt and coconut sugar together and gradually add the almond milk, whisking as you pour. Fold in the vanilla extract and apple cider vinegar.
- 4 Gradually fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients, until fully combined, but avoiding mixing too much.
- 5 Divide the mixture between the cupcake cases and bake in the oven for 25 minutes, or until cooked through. To check whether the cakes are cooked, insert a knife into the centre of one cake – if it comes out clean they are done; if still sticky, return to the oven and bake for a further 5 minutes, or until a knife inserted comes out clean. Remove from the oven and allow the cakes to cool on a wire rack.
- 6 While the cupcakes are cooling, make the coconut cream frosting. Scoop out the solid coconut cream that has risen to the top of the tin of coconut milk (this should be around 150g (5½oz)) and place in a large bowl. Use an electric hand whisk to whisk all the ingredients together until thickened, and the bowl can be turned upside down without the mixture moving. If it's not thick enough, keep in the fridge for about 20 minutes before spreading on the cupcakes.
- 7 Once the cupcakes have totally cooled (this is important), smoothly spread the coconut cream frosting onto each cake. Finish with a dusting of cacao powder and a sprinkling of cacao nibs over the cakes. Keep refrigerated in an airtight container.



Gluten-free mini strawberry frangipanes

By Seasonal Berries (www.seasonalberries.co.uk)

Makes 24

175g (6oz) strawberries, hulled

75g (3oz) butter, at room temperature

75g (3oz) caster sugar

50g (2oz) self-raising gluten-free flour blend

1 medium free-range egg

50g (2oz) ground almonds

a few drops of almond extract

40g (1½oz) flaked almonds

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Separate 24 foil or paper petite four cases and put into two 12 section mini muffin tins. Halve or quarter the strawberries, depending on their size, and keep 24 pieces to one side. Chop the rest.
- 2 Cream the butter and sugar together until soft and pale. Add the gluten-free flour and egg and mix until smooth, then stir in the ground almonds and almond extract.
- 3 Stir in the chopped strawberries, then spoon into the petite four cases. Press a strawberry piece into each one, then sprinkle with the flaked almonds. Bake for 12-15 minutes until well risen, golden brown and the cakes spring back when pressed with a fingertip.
- 4 Leave to cool for 10 minutes, then transfer the cakes to a wire rack to cool completely. Pack into a box lined with non-stick baking paper and tie with ribbon. Best eaten on the day of making.

Jack Frost muffins

By Denise O'Callaghan

Makes 12

200g (8oz) Denise's Delicious flour blend, (see below)

½ tsp gluten-free baking powder

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 tsp mixed spice

75g (3oz) demerara sugar

90ml (3fl oz) orange juice

60ml (2fl oz) milk

1 medium free-range egg

50g (2oz) butter, melted

125g (4½oz) dried cranberries

FOR THE TOPPING

2 tsp demerara sugar

½ tsp mixed spice

FOR THE FLOUR BLEND

250g (9oz) rice flour

25g (1oz) tapioca flour

275g (11oz) potato flour

275g (11oz) teff flour

1 tsp gluten-free baking powder

1 tsp guar gum

- 1 For the flour, sieve all the ingredients into a bowl and mix well. Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with paper cases.
- 2 In a large bowl, sieve the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and spice together. Add the sugar and mix together.
- 3 In another bowl, pour in the orange juice, add the milk and egg, and beat until combined. Don't worry if it curdles a bit. Add the melted butter and beat again.
- 4 Remembering that a lumpy batter makes light muffins, start mixing very lightly by hand, adding the wet ingredients to the dry. Do not beat or the muffins will be leathery and small. Gently add the cranberries and stir in lightly. Spoon into the muffin cases.
- 5 For the topping, mix together the sugar and mixed spice and sprinkle on top, then place in the centre of the oven.
- 6 Bake for 15-20 minutes, until golden brown and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out dry.
- 7 Remove from the oven, then remove from baking tin after 2-3 minutes. Allow to cool on a wire rack. When completely cool, store in an airtight container.



Recipe taken from
*Delicious Recipes
from my Gluten-Free
Kitchen* by Denise O'
Callaghan, published by
Mercier Press.
www.delicious.ie

Raw bites

By Trine Hahnemann

Makes 30

140g (5oz) almonds, skin on

120g (4½oz) raisins

275g (9½oz) dates, stoned

50g (1¾oz) coconut oil

50g (1¾oz) cacao powder

50ml (1¾fl oz) freshly squeezed orange juice

½ tsp vanilla extract

1 tsp ground cinnamon

100g (3½oz) desiccated coconut, to coat

- 1 Grind the almonds to a powder in a food processor.
- 2 Add all the ingredients, except the coconut, to a food processor and process to a smooth paste.
- 3 Remove from the processor and form into small squares by hand. You should get about 30 bars.
- 4 Roll in the desiccated coconut to serve. They will keep in the refrigerator for 2-3 weeks.



This recipe and the walnut kisses recipe on page 74 taken from Scandinavian Comfort Food by Trine Hahnemann (Quadrille, £25) Photography by Columbus Leth





Walnut kisses

By Trine Hahnemann

Makes 40

4 free-range egg whites

250g (9oz) caster sugar

½ tsp vinegar

150g (5¼oz) walnuts, chopped

- 1 Preheat the oven to 110°C/Gas Mark ¼. Line two baking sheets with baking parchment.
- 2 Using an electric hand whisk, whisk the egg whites until stiff, then whisk in the sugar, one tablespoon at a time, until very stiff and all the sugar has been added. Add the vinegar and fold in the chopped walnuts.
- 3 Using two spoons, place dollops of the meringue mixture on the sheets (not too neat; they should look rustic). Bake for 1 hour; then turn off the heat, open the oven door and leave it ajar for 15 minutes. Take the meringues out of the oven and leave to cool completely on a wire rack, still on their sheets of baking parchment.



Pomegranate, pistachio and lemon biscotti

By Aimee Twigger

Makes 10

FOR THE BISCOTTI

85g (3oz) unsalted butter

125g (4½oz) caster sugar

2 free-range eggs, beaten

grated zest of 1 lemon

and 2 tbsp juice

250g (9oz) plain flour

¾ tsp baking powder

1 tsp vanilla extract

a handful of chopped pistachios, plus a little extra for sprinkling

a handful of pomegranate seeds, plus a little extra for sprinkling

FOR THE ICING

2 tsp lemon juice

75g (2¾oz) icing sugar

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4 and line a baking tray with baking paper.
- 2 Cream the butter and sugar together until pale and creamy. Add the eggs, lemon juice, zest and vanilla extract, then sift in the flour and baking powder. Fold in the chopped pistachios and pomegranate seeds.
- 3 Use floured hands to shape the mixture into a log shape and place on the baking tray. Flatten the log a bit and sprinkle on some more chopped pistachios and pomegranate seeds.
- 4 Bake for 35 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool for 5 minutes, until it is cool enough to handle. Turn the oven down to 170°C/Gas Mark 3.
- 5 Slice the biscotti into thin diagonal pieces and place them, cut side up, on the baking tray. Bake for a further 15 minutes until lightly golden and crisp. Leave to cool on a wire rack.
- 6 Mix the lemon juice with the icing sugar and drizzle a little over each biscotti.



This recipe and the biscotti on page 74 are taken from *Aimee's Perfect Bakes* by Aimee Twigger, published by Murdoch Books. (RRP £16.99).

Cinnamon Danish pastry

By Aimee Twigger
Makes 10

FOR THE DOUGH

- 250g (9oz) strong white flour**
- 40g (1½oz) caster sugar**
- 1 tsp salt**
- 2 tsp fast-action dried yeast**
- 1 free-range egg**
- 45ml (1½fl oz) tepid water**
- 65ml (2fl oz) milk**
- 250g (9oz) unsalted butter**

FOR THE FILLING

- 175g (6oz) unsalted butter**
- 60g (2oz) soft light brown sugar**
- 3 tsp ground cinnamon**
- 2 tsp icing sugar**
- 1 free-range egg, beaten**

FOR THE LEMON DRIZZLE

- 2 tbsp lemon juice**
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest**
- 75g (2¾oz) icing sugar**

1 For the dough, put the flour, sugar, salt and yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, making sure the salt and yeast don't come into contact. Start mixing, while you add the egg, water and milk. Knead the dough for about 6 minutes. Lightly dust a worktop with flour and tip the dough out. Roll the dough into a ball and place it in a clean, dry plastic bag in the fridge while you prepare the butter.

- 2** Place the butter between two sheets of baking paper: Hit it with a rolling pin to flatten it into a rectangle.
- 3** Take the dough out of the fridge and roll it out on the floured surface into a large rectangle. Place the flattened butter in the middle and fold the dough over it. Turn it, then roll the dough out to a large rectangle again. Fold in half again, then follow these folding and rolling steps twice more. Cover the dough with clingfilm and return to the fridge for 1 hour.
- 4** Once rested, roll out the dough and fold, turn and roll twice more. Return the dough to the fridge for 30 minutes. Remove from the fridge, roll out the dough and fold again, twice, then leave the dough to rest in the fridge for at least 8 hours.
- 5** For the filling, melt the butter in a small saucepan over a gentle heat just until it's thick, but not too runny. Add the sugar, cinnamon and icing sugar and mix it all together.
- 6** Roll out the dough on a floured surface into a large rectangle and spread over the filling. Roll each side of the rectangle in to meet in the middle, then cut into 5cm (2in) thick slices. Place the cut slices on a lined baking tray with space in between and leave to prove for 2 hours, or until doubled in size.
- 7** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Brush some beaten egg on top of each pastry and bake for 15-20 minutes.
- 8** For the lemon drizzle, mix the lemon juice, lemon zest and icing sugar in a bowl to form a nice runny icing, then drizzle it over the baked pastries.

Christmas morning buns

By Martha Collison

Makes 11 rolls

- 410g (14oz) mincemeat**
- 50g (1¾oz) caster sugar**
- 75g (2¾oz) marzipan, chopped into small pieces**
- grated zest and juice of 1 orange**
- 1 free-range egg, beaten**
- 50g (1¾oz) smooth marmalade**
- 50g (1¾oz) icing sugar**
- glacé cherries (optional)**
- FOR THE DOUGH**
- 75g (2¾oz) unsalted butter, cubed**
- 200ml (7fl oz) whole milk**
- 500g (1lb 1oz)**
- 2 tsp fast-action dried yeast**
- 1 tsp salt**
- 50g (1¾oz) caster sugar**
- 2 free-range eggs**

- 1** For the dough, put the butter into a small saucepan with the milk. Heat on low until the cubes of butter are completely melted, then set aside to cool for a few minutes.
- 2** Put the flour into a large bowl and add the yeast to one side of the bowl and the salt and sugar to the other. This positioning is important, because if you put the salt directly onto the yeast it may kill it, which will stop your dough from rising.
- 3** Beat the eggs into the lukewarm milk mixture (it should feel slightly warm when you stick a finger in it). Gradually add this to the dry ingredients, stirring all the time, until a sticky, but not wet dough forms. You may not need to add all the milk mixture.
- 4** Turn the dough out onto a lightly oiled work surface and knead for 10-15 minutes, or until it is no longer sticky and has become a smooth and elastic dough. Put it into an oiled bowl, cover with clingfilm and leave in a warm place for 1-2 hours, or until doubled in size.
- 5** When the dough has risen, turn it out onto the oiled surface and fold it in on itself a couple of times to knock out any large air bubbles, then roll it into a large rectangle about 45cm (17½in) long.
- 6** Spread the mincemeat over the dough in an even layer; then cover with the caster sugar. Sprinkle the marzipan over the mincemeat, followed by the orange zest.
- 7** Starting with the 45cm (17½in) side, roll the dough towards you into a long sausage shape. Slice off the ends of the sausage so you can see the spiral, which will make all the buns look the same. You can still bake the offcuts, if you like! Cut into 11 equal-sized rolls and put onto a lined baking sheet in a tree formation – 1, 2, 3, 4, 1. Cover with oiled clingfilm and leave to rise for 45-60 minutes, until almost doubled in size.
- 8** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6. Brush the buns with the beaten egg, then bake for 20 minutes, or until the top is golden brown and the buns have risen.
- 9** Heat the marmalade in a small saucepan until liquid, then brush over the buns to create a sticky glaze.
- 10** Mix the icing sugar with the orange juice so it forms a thick paste. Put into a piping bag and pipe lines across the bread, following the natural line between each row of buns to create a tinsel effect. You could even add glacé cherry baubles, if desired. Serve warm for the freshest flavour.



This recipe and the butterscotch bars on page 78 are taken from *Twist* by Martha Collison, photography by Tara Fisher, published by HarperCollins, (RRP £16.99).





Butterscotch almond bars

By Martha Collison

Makes 24

100g (3½oz) butter

275g (10oz) caster sugar

50g (1¾oz) golden syrup

75g (2¾oz) flaked almonds, finely chopped

a pinch of sea salt

200g (7oz) dark chocolate

- 1 Line a 20x35cm (8x12in) baking tin with baking parchment.
- 2 Mix the butter, sugar and golden syrup in a large heavy-based saucepan and stir in 50ml (1¾fl oz) water. Bring to the boil and allow the mixture to bubble until it turns dark golden brown. It takes about 10 minutes to reach this point on a fairly high heat.
- 3 Take the saucepan off the heat and add the almonds and sea salt. Stir well, then pour the hot mixture into the tin. When the mixture has been cooling for 5 minutes, it will begin to harden. At this point, use a sharp knife to divide the mixture into 24 squares. You don't need to cut all the way through – just marking it will make it easier to break into neat pieces when it is completely cool.
- 4 Temper the chocolate, then dip each square into the chocolate. If you like, you can make a pattern by dragging a fork across the top of the chocolate, then leave to harden completely on a piece of baking parchment. These will keep well in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks.



Chocolate Rice Krispie wreaths

By Baking Mad (www.bakingmad.com)

Serves 4

25g (1oz) unsalted butter

2 tbsp golden syrup

150g (5½oz) milk chocolate, chopped

100g (3½oz) Rice Krispies

edible decorations

- 1 Place the butter and syrup in a small pan and heat gently until the butter has melted. Add the chocolate and stir until it has melted and the mixture is smooth.
- 2 Stir in the Rice Krispies until well coated in chocolate.
- 3 Line a baking tray with baking parchment and place teaspoonfuls of the mixture in small ring shapes on the paper.
- 4 Allow to cool in the fridge for 10 minutes until firm, then top with edible decorations. Add a ribbon tied in a bow. Store in a cake tin for 2 days.



Mini gingerbread houses

By Baking Mad (www.bakingmad.com)

Makes 6

175g (6oz) unrefined dark muscovado sugar

1 free-range egg

4 tbsp golden syrup

500g (1lb 1oz) royal icing

silver balls

edible glitter

350g (12oz) plain white flour

1½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

3 tsp ground ginger

2 tsp cinnamon

125g (4½oz) unsalted butter

- 1** Place the flour, bicarbonate of soda and spices in a food mixer and mix until evenly distributed.
- 2** Add the butter and mix until you reach a consistency similar to breadcrumbs. Mix in the sugar, ensuring that any chunks of sugar are broken up.
- 3** In a separate bowl, mix together the egg and golden syrup, then gradually pour in with the other ingredients.
- 4** Continue to mix the ingredients until it forms a dough, then remove and knead for a few minutes by hand.
- 5** Wrap the ball of dough up in clingfilm and chill in the fridge for 15-20 minutes.
- 6** While the dough is chilling, draw out a template on paper for your gingerbread house structure. The sides and roof pieces are 3cm (1¼in) high and 4.5cm (1¾in) wide. You will need four of these.
- 7** The two front and back panels are 3cm (1¼in) high x 4cm (1½in) x 3cm (1¼in) for the roof slants. You will need to create a doorway on these panels where your house will perch on the cup. This should begin 1.5cm (¾in) in from each side, 1cm (½in) in width and 1.5cm (¾in) in height.
- 8** Cut out the templates and put aside.
- 9** Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line two baking trays with baking paper.
- 10** Remove the dough from the fridge and roll out to approximately 5mm (¼in) thick. Use the templates to cut out the shapes with a knife.
- 11** Place your shapes on the baking trays, spaced well apart, and place back in the fridge to chill for 10-15 minutes.
- 12** Once chilled, bake the gingerbread for 10-12 minutes. Remove the biscuits from the oven and cool.
- 13** Piece the biscuits together: Fill a piping bag with royal icing and snip a small hole to pipe. Carefully pipe around the outline of the reverse of your front and back house panels.
- 14** Fix together all the pieces of the house and hold in position until your icing sets. You can fill out any gaps with more royal icing on the outside if needed.
- 15** Pipe decorative features on the roof and front of your houses and add any decorations or edible glitter for a finishing touch. Allow to fully dry before placing on your mugs.

Gingerbread tree decorations

By Juliet Sear for Billington's Unrefined Sugars
(www.billingtons.co.uk)

Makes 20

70g (2¼OZ) golden syrup

Juice of 1 orange

90g (3½oz) Billington's Unrefined Light Muscovado Sugar

1 tbsp ground ginger

½ tbsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp vanilla extract

100g (3½oz) butter, diced

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

240g (9oz) plain flour

coloured royal icing

edible balls

edible glitter

- 1 Mix the golden syrup, orange juice, sugar, ginger, cinnamon and vanilla extract in a pan and heat, stirring regularly, on a low to medium heat until all the sugar is dissolved and everything is melted and combined.
- 2 Add the butter and stir gently until fully incorporated. Add the bicarbonate of soda and whisk into the hot mix until it is fluffy and paler in colour.
- 3 Tip the mix into a stand mixer bowl and, when it has cooled slightly, add all the flour and beat on slow, or mix with a wooden spoon until the mix comes together into a dough.
- 4 Turn out onto two large pieces of clingfilm laid out in a cross formation and wrap up to seal the block of dough. Chill for at least 2 hours before rolling, or leave overnight in a fridge and roll out the next day.
- 5 When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 6 Using a little extra plain flour, knead and roll out to an even thickness.
- 7 Cut out using Christmas cookie shapes, then place on a lined baking sheet, leaving space between each one.
- 8 Make a little hole in the cookie dough to thread with ribbon by using a straw as a hole cutter.
- 9 Bake for 10-15 minutes, or when the cookies appear golden. When pressed with a fingertip they should spring back.
- 10 Leave to cool on the tray or a wire rack, then get decorating by piping coloured royal icing and adding edible glitter or edible silver balls.





Salted caramel mazurek with pecans

By Zuza Zak

Serves 8

FOR THE DOUGH

300g (10½oz) plain flour

125g (4½oz) soft light brown sugar

200g (7oz) salted butter, softened

2 free-range egg yolks

½ tsp vanilla extract

1 tbsp soured cream

FOR THE FILLING

400g (14fl oz) tinned condensed milk

25g (1 oz) salted butter

25g (1 oz) soft light brown sugar

100g (3½oz) pecans, broken up into smaller pieces

½ tsp good-quality sea salt

- 1 For the filling, place a tin of condensed milk in a pan of water, making sure it is completely covered. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce the heat down to the lowest setting and simmer for 3 hours. Top up with extra water if it evaporates.
- 2 Meanwhile, combine the flour, sugar and butter in a bowl and work between your fingertips until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add the egg yolks, vanilla extract and soured cream and knead together into a smooth dough. Chill in the fridge for 30-45 minutes.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface 1cm (½in) thick and use it to line a greased 24cm (9½in) brownie tin. Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes, or until golden. Remove and allow to cool.
- 4 Meanwhile, in a frying pan, melt the butter and sugar together over a low heat, then add the pecans and most of the sea salt. Toast for a few minutes, stirring all the time. Set aside.
- 5 Once the condensed milk has turned to caramel and cooled to nearly room temperature, open the tin and stir a little bit more salt into it, reserving a little bit for the topping.
- 6 Generously spread the caramel over the cooled base and top with the caramelised pecans. Sprinkle over a little more sea salt before serving.



The recipe on this page is taken from *Polska* by Zuza Zak, published by Quadrille. (RRP £25).



Blueberry and creamy lemon croissants

By Berry World (www.berryworld.com)

Makes 6

1 x 25g (1oz) Jus Rol Bake It Fresh Dough Croissants
50g (1¾oz) cream cheese
grated zest of 1 lemon
3 tsp caster sugar
120g (4½oz) blueberries

- 1** Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
- 2** Follow the instructions on the dough packet and separate into triangles. Mix together the cream cheese, lemon zest and sugar; then divide the mixture between the croissants, starting at the small side end. Top with the blueberries and roll to form crescents. Place on a lightly greased baking tray 5cm (2in) apart.
- 3** Bake for 10-15 minutes until risen and golden brown.
- 4** Serve fresh and warm from the oven, taking care as the blueberry filling is hot.



Strawberry shortbreads

By Berry World (www.berryworld.com)

Makes 20-25

230g (8oz) unsalted butter, soft
125g (4½oz) caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
250g (9oz) plain flour
250g (9oz) double cream
1 tbs icing sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
200g (7oz) strawberries, halved

- 1** For the shortbread dough, butter and line a baking tray with parchment paper. Cream the butter and the sugar together in a bowl until light and fluffy. Add the vanilla extract, then the flour; a little at a time, and incorporate until the dough is smooth.
- 2** Using a little extra flour; knead the dough on a flat surface, then roll 1cm (½in) thick with a rolling pin. Cut the shortbread dough out with a 5cm (2in) cookie cutter. Place the shortbread biscuit on some baking parchment. Cover with clingfilm and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- 3** Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3. Take the tray out of the fridge and prick each of the shortbread biscuit rounds with a fork. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes, or until the biscuits are golden. Cool on a wire rack.
- 4** Whip the double cream until stiff; then fold in the icing sugar and vanilla. Use the whipped cream to sandwich the shortbread biscuits together; then layer the strawberries on top of the cream.



Cranberry palets with apricot-rum glaze

By Kathryn Gordon and Anne E. McBride

Makes 60

FOR THE COOKIES

40g (1½oz) unsalted butter, at room temperature

50g (1¾oz) granulated sugar

1 large free-range egg

½ tsp vanilla extract

45g (1½oz) plain flour

30g (1¼oz) dried cranberries, finely chopped

FOR THE GLAZE

2 tbsp apricot preserves

1 tbsp dark rum

45g (1½oz) icing sugar

- 1 For the cookies, preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6 and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 2 In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar on a medium speed until the mixture becomes pale and fluffy. Gradually incorporate the egg, then the vanilla. Add the flour and cranberries and mix until just combined.
- 3 Spoon the batter into a piping bag fitted with a 1.25cm (½in) round tip. Pipe the batter into 4cm (1½in) mounds on the baking sheet, 2.5cm (1in) apart, until the batter is used up. If not all of the cookies fit on the baking sheet, keep the batter in the bag until the first batch has baked, or use a second lined baking sheet.
- 4 Bake for 6 minutes, until the cookies are golden around the edges. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely on the baking sheet.
- 5 For the glaze, heat the apricot preserves in a microwave-safe bowl, or in a small saucepan over a medium heat, until barely fluid. Brush the glaze on the cooled cookies.
- 6 Stir the rum into the icing sugar in a small bowl. Drizzle on the cookies in a decorative pattern. Let the glaze dry before stacking the cookies. Store them in an airtight container for up to 3 days at room temperature. Place a sheet of waxed paper in between each layer to make sure they don't stick together.



Recipe taken from *Les Petits Sweets: Two-Bite Desserts from the French Patisserie* by Kathryn Gordon and Anne E. McBride, published by Running Press. (RRP £11.99).

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Gingerbread brownies

By Annie Rigg

Makes 16

275g (9½oz) dark chocolate, chopped

175g (6oz) butter, cubed

125g (4½oz) plain flour

1 tsp ground cinnamon

2 tsp ground ginger

¼ tsp ground nutmeg

a pinch of hot chilli powder

a pinch of salt

50g (1¾oz) crystallized ginger

175g (6oz) dark muscovado sugar

2 tbsp golden syrup

1 tbsp black treacle

4 free-range eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

50g (1¾oz) flaked almonds, chopped

FOR THE GANACHE TOPPING

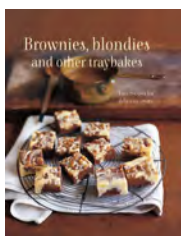
150g (5½oz) dark chocolate, chopped

150ml (5½fl oz) double cream

1 tbsp light muscovado sugar

a pinch of salt

edible gold sprinkles



Recipe taken from *Brownies, Blondies & Other Traybakes* by Ryland Peters & Small, photography by Laura Edwards. Readers can buy the book for the special price of £10.99 including p&p (RRP £14.99) by telephoning Macmillan Direct on 01256 302 699 and quoting reference HT3.

- 1 Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3. Grease and line a 20cm (8in) square baking tin with parchment paper.
- 2 Melt the chocolate and butter in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water. Do not let the base of the bowl touch the water. Stir frequently, until smooth and well mixed. Leave to cool slightly.
- 3 Sift together the flour, all the spices and salt.
- 4 Finely chop the crystallized ginger. Lightly whisk the sugar, syrup, black treacle, eggs and vanilla extract until combined. Add the melted chocolate mixture and stir until combined. Stir the almonds and half the chopped ginger into the bowl. Fold in the sifted dry ingredients.
- 5 Pour the mixture into a baking tin, spread level and bake on the middle shelf of the oven for about 25 minutes, or until the brownies are set. Remove from the oven and leave to cool completely in the tin. When cold, remove the brownies from the tin, wrap in clingfilm and leave overnight.
- 6 The next day, make the ganache topping. Heat the cream and sugar in a small pan until the sugar has dissolved and the cream is just boiling. Add the salt.
- 7 Pour it over the chopped chocolate and leave to melt. Stir until smooth, then leave to cool and thicken slightly before using. Spread over the top of the brownies, score with the tines of a fork to make a diagonal pattern, then cut into 16 squares. Scatter the rest of the chopped ginger and a few gold sprinkles over the top.



Viennese whirls

By Emma Richards (www.foreverbaking.co.uk)

Makes 18

FOR THE BISCUITS

250g (9oz) very soft butter

50g (1¾oz) icing sugar, plus extra to decorate

250g (9oz) plain flour

50g (1¾oz) cornflour

½ tsp vanilla extract

FOR THE FILLING

100g (3½oz) soft butter

200g (7oz) icing sugar, plus ½ tsp for dusting

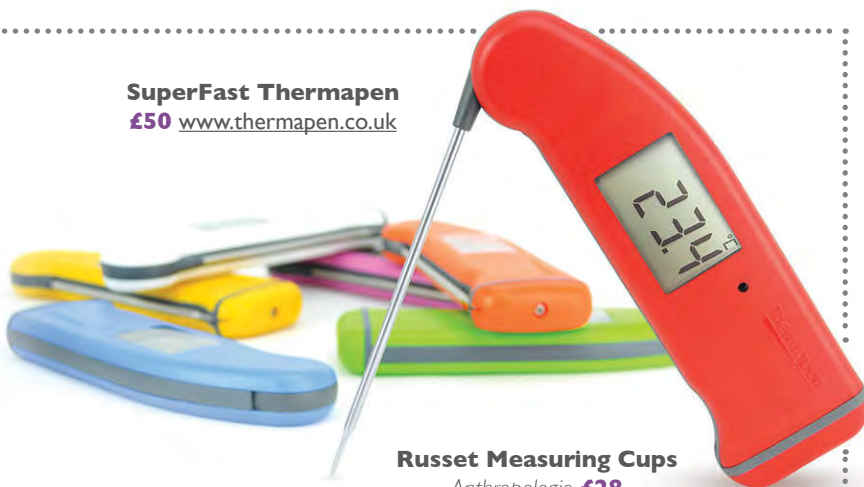
½ tsp vanilla extract

75g (2¾oz) seedless raspberry jam

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5. Line a baking sheet with greaseproof paper.
- 2 Put the butter, icing sugar, plain flour, cornflour and vanilla extract in a food processor and beat until smooth.
- 3 Spoon the dough into a piping bag fitted with a large star nozzle. Pipe 18 x 6cm (2½in) rosettes of the dough, spacing well apart. (If you're a bit of a perfectionist like me you may want to trace around some circle cutters to give you a guideline.)
- 4 Bake in the centre of the oven for 13-15 minutes, or until pale golden-brown and firm.
- 5 Cool on the baking tray for 5 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack.
- 6 Repeat with the remaining dough to make 36 biscuits.
- 7 For the filling, put the butter in a bowl and sift the icing sugar on top. Add the vanilla extract and beat with a wooden spoon or an electric whisk until very light and smooth.
- 8 Spoon into a clean piping bag fitted with a large star nozzle.
- 9 Put the jam in a bowl and stir until smooth.
- 10 Spoon a little jam onto the flat side of 18 of the biscuits and place jam-side up on the cooling rack.
- 11 Pipe the buttercream icing onto the remaining biscuits and sandwich with the jam.
- 12 Place on a serving plate and dust with sifted icing sugar.



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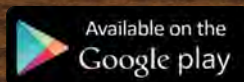
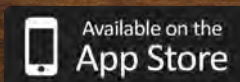
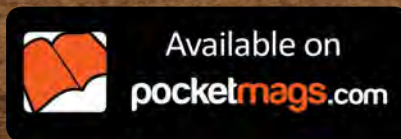
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Almond praline macarons

By Annie Rigg

Makes 20

BASIC MACARON RECIPE

200g (7oz) icing sugar

100g (3½oz) ground almonds

3 free-range egg whites

a pinch of salt

40g (1½oz) caster sugar

FOR THE ALMOND MACARONS

1 quantity of basic macarons recipe (see above)

2 tbsp slivered almonds, chopped

1 tbsp icing sugar

FOR THE FILLING

50g (1½oz) blanched almonds

50g (1½oz) caster sugar

125ml (4½fl oz) double cream

food colouring paste (optional)

- 1 Prepare the filling before you make the macaron shells. Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper and oil a third sheet with sunflower oil.
- 2 Tip the blanched almonds into a small roasting tin and toast in the oven for about 5 minutes. Leave to cool slightly.
- 3 Put the sugar and 1 tbsp water in a small saucepan over a low-medium heat and let the sugar dissolve completely. Increase the heat and bring to the boil, then cook until the syrup turns to an amber-coloured caramel. Add the toasted almonds and, working quickly, stir to coat in the caramel. Tip the praline mixture onto the oiled baking sheet and leave until completely cold. Break the cold, hard praline into pieces and whiz in the food processor until finely ground.
- 4 For the basic macarons, tip the icing sugar and almonds into the bowl of a food processor and blend for 30 seconds until thoroughly combined. Set aside.
- 5 Tip the egg whites into a spotlessly clean and dry mixing bowl. Add the salt and, using an electric handheld whisk, beat until they will only just hold a stiff peak.
- 6 Continue to whisk at medium speed while adding the caster sugar, a teaspoonful at a time. Mix well between each addition to ensure that the sugar is thoroughly incorporated before adding the next spoonful. The mixture should be thick, white and glossy.
- 7 At this point you should add in any food colouring paste. Dip a cocktail stick into the paste and stir into the mixture, mixing thoroughly to ensure that the colour is evenly blended. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula.
- 8 Using a large metal spoon, fold the ground sugar and almond mixture into the egg whites.
- 9 The mixture should be thoroughly incorporated and smooth – this can take up to 1 minute. When it is ready, the mixture should drop from the spoon in a smooth molten mass.
- 10 Fill the piping bag with the mixture and pipe evenly-sized rounds onto the baking sheets. Tap the baking sheets sharply on the work surface, then scatter the chopped slivered almonds and icing sugar over the tops. Leave the macarons to rest for 15-60 minutes.
- 11 Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3.
- 12 Bake the macarons on the middle shelf of the oven, one sheet at a time, for 10 minutes. Leave to cool on the baking sheet. Lightly whip the cream and stir in the ground praline. Spread the filling over half the macaron shells and sandwich with the other half. Leave to rest for 30 minutes before serving.



The recipes on pages 92-94 are taken from *Macarons* by Annie Rigg, photography by Kate Whitaker, published by Ryland Peters & Small. Readers can buy the book for the special price of £7.99 including p&p (RRP £9.99) by telephoning Macmillan Direct on 01256 302 699 and quoting the reference HS7.



Gingerbread spice macarons

By Annie Rigg
Makes 20

FOR THE PASTRY

1 quantity of basic macarons recipe (see page 92)

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp ground ginger

a pinch of ground cloves

a pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

FOR THE FILLING

150g (5½oz) mascarpone

1 tbsp dulce de leche

1 tbsp stem ginger, finely chopped

½ tsp ground cinnamon

2 solid baking sheets, lined with baking parchment

- 1 Prepare the basic macarons according to the recipe on page 92, adding the cinnamon, ginger, cloves and nutmeg to the food processor in Step 4.
- 2 Pipe rounds of mixture onto the baking sheets. Tap the baking sheets sharply on the work surface and leave the macarons to rest for 15-60 minutes.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3.
- 4 Bake the macarons on the middle shelf of the oven, one sheet at a time, for 10 minutes. Leave to cool on the baking sheet.
- 5 For the filling, put the mascarpone in a small bowl and stir in the dulce de leche, stem ginger and cinnamon.
- 6 Spread the filling over half the macaron shells and sandwich with the other half. Leave to rest for about 30 minutes before serving.





Brownie pops

By Annie Rigg
Makes 24

- 100g (3½oz) walnuts or pecans (optional)**
- 200g (7oz) dark chocolate, chopped**
- 175g (6oz) butter, cubed**
- 250g (9oz) caster sugar**
- 4 free-range eggs**
- 1 tsp vanilla extract**
- 125g (4½oz) plain flour**
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder**
- a pinch of salt**
- 75g (2½oz) milk chocolate chips**
- 3-4 tbsp apricot or raspberry jam**

- FOR THE MILK CHOCOLATE TOPPING**
- 125g (4oz) dark chocolate, finely chopped**
- 125g (4oz) milk chocolate, finely chopped**
- 175ml (6fl oz) double cream**
- 1 tbsp maple syrup**
- 125g (4½oz) butter, softened**
- TO DECORATE**
- assorted sugar sprinkles, stars and other edible festive decorations**

- 1** It is easiest to stamp out brownie shapes if the base is prepared and baked the day before you plan to decorate your brownies.
- 2** Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3.
- 3** If you're adding nuts, tip them onto a baking sheet and lightly toast in the oven for 5 minutes. Roughly chop and leave to cool. Leave the oven on for the brownies.

- 4** Melt the chocolate and butter in a bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water. Do not let the base of the bowl touch the water. Stir until smooth and combined. Leave to cool slightly.
- 5** In a separate bowl, whisk the sugar, eggs and vanilla extract with a balloon whisk until pale and thick. Add the melted chocolate mixture and stir until combined. Sift the flour, cocoa powder and salt into the bowl and fold in until well incorporated, then stir in the chocolate chips and nuts (if using). Pour the mixture into a greased and lined 20x30cm (8x12in) baking tin, spread level with a spatula and bake on the middle shelf for 25 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool completely in the tin.
- 6** Remove the cold brownie from the tin. Using the cookie cutter, stamp out 24 rounds from the brownies and arrange on a tray.
- 7** Warm the jam in a small pan, sieve it, then brush it all over the brownie rounds. Leave on a wire rack for 5-10 minutes to set.
- 8** For the milk chocolate topping, tip the chocolate into a small, heatproof bowl. Heat the cream and syrup in a pan until only just boiling. Pour it over the chocolate, add the butter and leave to melt. Stir until smooth, then leave to thicken slightly before using.
- 9** Using a palette knife, spread the milk chocolate topping evenly all over the brownie rounds, then push a lolly stick into each pop. Lay them on a sheet of baking parchment and leave until the topping is starting to set. Decorate with an assortment of sprinkles and decorations by making patterns on the faces of the pops, and by scattering sprinkles generously over the edges.



Butterscotch blondies

By Annie Rigg

Makes 18

75g (2½oz) pecans

225g (8oz) plain flour

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

a pinch of salt

150g (5½oz) butter, softened

150g (5½oz) light muscovado sugar

100g (3½oz) unrefined sugar

2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten

1 tsp vanilla extract

50g (1¾oz) chocolate chips

75g (2¾oz) toffees, chopped

FOR THE CARAMEL TOPPING

150g (5½oz) sugar

150ml (5½fl oz) double cream

200g (7oz) butter, softened

a piping bag, fitted with a plain nozzled

- 1 Preheat the oven to 170°C/Gas Mark 3. Grease and line a 20x30cm (8x12in) baking tin with parchment paper.
- 2 Tip the pecans onto a baking sheet and lightly toast in the oven for 5 minutes. Roughly chop and leave to cool.
- 3 Sift together the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt in a bowl.
- 4 In a separate bowl, cream together the butter and sugars until pale and light. Gradually add the eggs, beating well after each addition. Stir in the vanilla extract. Fold the sifted dry ingredients into the bowl until well incorporated, then stir in the chocolate chips, pecans and toffees. Spoon the mixture into the baking tin, spread level and bake on the middle shelf of the oven for 25 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave to cool completely in the pan.
- 5 For the caramel topping, put the sugar and 1 tbsp water in a small, heavy-based pan over a low-medium heat and let the sugar dissolve without stirring. Raise the heat and continue to cook until the sugar turns a deep amber colour. Remove from the heat and add the cream – the caramel will bubble furiously and harden, but stir to melt the caramel into the cream and leave until completely cold.
- 6 Beat the butter until light and fluffy, then add the cold caramel in a steady stream and stir until incorporated and smooth.
- 7 Remove the brownies from the tin and cut into portions. Spoon the caramel topping into a piping bag and pipe a generous swirl on top of each brownie.



The recipes on pages 95-96 are taken from *Brownies, Blondies & Other Traybakes* by Annie Rigg, photography by Laura Edwards, published by Ryland Peters & Small. Readers can buy the book for the special price of £10.99 including p&p (RRP £14.99) by telephoning Macmillan Direct on 01256 302 699 and quoting reference HT3.



This recipe is taken from *BakeClass* by Anneka Manning, published by Murdoch Books. (RRP £20).



Classic walnut brownies

By Anneka Manning

Makes about 24

melted butter, to grease **75g (2½oz) plain flour**
250g (9oz) good-quality dark chocolate, chopped **2 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder**
150g (5½oz) butter, cubed **¾ tsp baking powder**
165g (5¾oz) brown sugar **150g (5½oz) walnuts, toasted**
3 free-range eggs, lightly whisked **icing sugar, to dust (optional)**

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Grease a 16x26cm (6¼x10½in) shallow baking tin. Line the base and long sides with baking paper.
- 2 Place the chocolate and butter in a medium heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, making sure the base of the bowl doesn't touch the water. Stir occasionally until the chocolate and butter have melted and the mixture is smooth. Remove the bowl from the saucepan.
- 3 Add the brown sugar and eggs to the chocolate mixture and use a balloon whisk to stir until well combined.
- 4 Sift together the flour, cocoa powder and baking powder. Add to the chocolate mixture and stir until just combined. Stir in the toasted walnuts.
- 5 Pour the mixture into the baking tin and spread evenly. Bake in the oven for 35-40 minutes, or until moist crumbs cling to a skewer inserted in the centre. Leave to cool in the tin.
- 6 Lift out the brownie from the tin using the baking paper. Cut into squares and serve dusted with icing sugar, if desired. These brownies will keep in an airtight container in a cool place (but not in the fridge) for up to 5 days.

TIP To toast the walnuts, spread on a baking tray and toast in the oven for 8-10 minutes, or until lightly golden and aromatic.

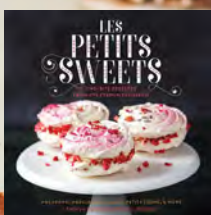
Orange and rosemary shortbread

By Kathryn Gordon and Anne E. McBride

Makes 16 wedges

170g (6oz) unsalted butter, at room temperature
85g (3oz) granulated sugar, divided
½ tsp fresh rosemary, finely chopped
finely grated zest of 1 orange
180g (6oz) all-purpose flour
½ tsp fine sea salt, divided

- 1 Preheat the oven to 150°C/Gas Mark 2.
- 2 In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter, 80g (2¾oz) sugar, rosemary and orange zest on medium speed until the mixture becomes pale and fluffy, 5-10 minutes. Add the flour and ¼ tsp salt and mix until just combined, about 30 seconds.
- 3 Press the dough down into a 23cm (9in) round cake or pie tin lined with two crisscrossing sheets of parchment paper. It should be about 1.25cm (½in) thick.
- 4 Stir together the remaining sugar and salt. Sprinkle over the top of the shortbread.
- 5 Bake for 30-35 minutes, or until the shortbread feels firm when you touch it and it pulls slightly from the edges of the pan.
- 6 Remove from the oven and cut into 16 wedges while the shortbread is warm. Store at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 4 days, or in the freezer, wrapped in clingfilm, for up to 2 months.



This recipe and the shortbread on page 97 are taken from *Les Petits Sweets: Two-Bite Desserts from the French Patisserie* by Kathryn Gordon and Anne E. McBride, published by Running Press. (RRP £11.99).

Fig, cherry, pistachio and chocolate nougat

By Kathryn Gordon and Anne E. McBride

Makes 24 squares

200g (7oz) granulated sugar

1 vanilla pod

75g (2½oz) water

2 large free-range egg whites

165g (5½oz) orange blossom honey

2 x 28x22cm (11x8in) sheets of wafer paper

1 tbsp Grand Marnier

½ tsp finely grated orange zest

⅛ tsp fleur de sel

75g (2¾oz) pistachios, toasted (below)

65g (2½oz) dried cherries, cut into 5mm (¼in) pieces

50g (1¾oz) dried figs, cut into 5mm (¼in) pieces

75g (2¾oz) bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

- 1 Pour the sugar into a saucepan. Split the vanilla pod lengthwise and scrape out the seeds into the sugar. Rub the pod into the sugar to scrape out more vanilla seeds. Pour the water around the edges of the pan, and swirl it into the centre.
- 2 In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, begin to whisk the egg whites on medium speed until soft peaks form. Reduce the speed to low if the egg whites are at soft peaks before the syrup is ready.

- 3 While the egg whites are whipping, clip a sugar thermometer to the side of a small saucepan. Place the honey in the pan and heat over a medium heat.
- 4 When the honey reaches 110°C/230°F, turn your attention back to the vanilla mixture. Heat over a medium heat and stir carefully, avoiding the sides of the pan. Clean the sides with a pastry brush dipped in water. As the honey will be ready before the vanilla syrup, clip the same thermometer to the side of the syrup pan afterwards.
- 5 When the honey reaches 121°C/250°F, quickly and steadily pour it down the side of the mixer bowl, with the mixer running at low speed. Rest the lip of the saucepan on the side of the bowl so the honey does not hit the whisk attachment and splatter (it should run gradually down the side of the bowl).
- 6 Once the vanilla syrup reaches 139°C/282°F, quickly remove the vanilla pod with kitchen tongs and follow the same procedure to pour it into the egg whites.
- 7 Increase the mixer to medium and whip for about 25 minutes until the meringue cools, thickens, and becomes stiff and shiny.
- 8 Line a dry surface with parchment paper. Place one sheet of the wafer paper, shiny-side up, on top of the parchment paper.
- 9 Remove the bowl from the mixer. Working quickly, use a spatula to stir in the Grand Marnier, orange zest, fleur de sel, pistachios, cherries and figs. Once everything is thoroughly mixed, stir in the chocolate.
- 10 Scoop out the nougat onto the wafer paper. Place the second sheet, shiny-side down, on top of the nougat, then roll out the nougat flat until it is about 2cm (¾in) thick. Let set for 2 hours at room temperature, then cut the nougat into pieces.



Candy cane biscuits

By Amy-Beth Ellice

Makes 10

225g (8oz) plain flour

150g (5oz) butter

50g (2oz) caster sugar

1 free-range egg, beaten

red food colouring paste

1 tsp peppermint extract

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line 2-3 baking trays with parchment paper. Sift the flour into a bowl and rub in the butter until the texture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the sugar and the egg, and, using a knife, continue to mix until it forms a soft dough. Turn the dough out onto a floured work surface and knead into a large ball.
- 2 Separate the dough into halves. To one half add the peppermint extract. To the other half, add a little red food colouring and knead it into the dough until you get a bright red colour. Add more colouring if needed.
- 3 Roll out a tablespoon-sized piece of dough of each colour into a long sausage shape about 1cm (½in) thick. Do this with both colours. Lay both colours side by side and gently wrap each colour around each other. Curve one end of the biscuit. Lift the biscuits onto the baking trays and trim each end. Repeat with the remaining dough. Bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes.



This recipe is taken from *Amy's Baking Year* by Amy-Beth Ellice, published by Metro Books.



Almond fork biscuits

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 16

100g (3½oz) butter, softened

50g (1¾oz) caster sugar

150g (5½oz) self-raising flour

25g (1oz) flaked almonds

a few drops of almond extract

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2 Lightly grease two baking trays.
- 3 Measure the butter into a bowl and beat with a wooden spoon. Gradually beat in the sugar and almond extract, then mix in the flour. Bring the mixture together with your hands to form a dough, adding a little water if required. Form the dough into balls about the size of a walnut and place, spaced well apart, on the baking trays. Dip a fork in a little water and use it to flatten the biscuits. Sprinkle flaked almonds on top.
- 4 Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes until lightly golden. Lift off the baking tray and leave to cool completely on a wire rack.

Cherry surprise chocolates

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes 20

225g (8oz) icing sugar, sifted

1 tbsp liquid glucose

1 tsp cherry liqueur

a small jar of maraschino cherries (you will need 20 cherries and some of the liquid)

400g (14oz) white or milk chocolate, roughly chopped

- 1 Place a chocolate mould in the fridge 20 minutes before starting. For the fondant filling, mix together the icing sugar, liquid glucose, cherry liqueur and 3 teaspoonfuls of the liquid from the maraschino cherry jar. Set aside.
- 2 Place 50g (1¾oz) chocolate into a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Melt the chocolate very slowly, stirring all the time. Remove the chocolate from the heat.
- 3 Take the mould from the refrigerator and fill a third of each shape with chocolate; using a small paint brush, spread the chocolate up the sides of the shapes until all covered. Return the mould to the fridge for about 10 minutes. Once set, check to see if there are any gaps in the chocolate; if so, fill them in with melted chocolate and chill again to set.
- 4 Add a cherry to each chocolate and top with cherry filling, leaving space for a layer of chocolate. Refrigerate until the filling is firmer. When firm to touch, melt the remaining chocolate and pour on top of the filling so that it comes level with the sides of each shape and completes the chocolate.
- 5 Return to the fridge for about 30 minutes until completely hardened. When ready, gently flex the moulds to release the chocolates and store in a cool dry place.





Snowman snow globes

By Elise Strachen
Makes 12 snowmen

- 100g (3½oz) white chocolate**
- 12 x 600ml (1pt) mason jars with lids**
- 24 Raffaello (coconut truffles with almond centres) (keep refrigerated until ready to use)**
- 12 Lindt Lindor White Chocolate Truffles (keep refrigerated until ready to use)**
- 55g (2oz) black candy melts**
- 12 orange candy-coated sunflower seeds**
- 6 Mini Oreo Cookies**
- 6 mini peanut butter cups or Rolo Chewy Caramels (little cups)**
- red candy straps**
- 65g (2½oz) shredded coconut**

- 1** Melt the white chocolate and place 1 tablespoon of it onto the inside of each of the mason jar lids. Place one Raffaello into the white melted chocolate on the lid, and refrigerate to set.
- 2** Once set, place ¼ tsp white melted chocolate onto the Raffaello and glue a second Raffaello on top (for the snowman's body). Allow to set. Use more melted chocolate to glue on one of the Lindor truffles (the snowman's head) and allow to set.
- 3** Melt the black candy melts and use the flat end of a toothpick to fashion two black eyes and a line of black dots for a mouth. Place three black dots (buttons) down the front of the two bottom truffles.
- 4** Place a small dab of white melted chocolate on the fat side of a sunflower seed and attach it to the top truffle; this is the snowman's nose.
- 5** Split the Mini Oreo Cookies in half and scrape the cream filling off of the cookies.
- 6** Use a small amount of black melted candy to glue a mini peanut butter cup (or a Rolo) to one of the scraped cookies to make a hat. Use white melted chocolate to attach the hat to the snowman's head.
- 7** For the snowmen's scarves, cut a candy strap into a piece 13cm (5in) long and 5mm (¼in) wide and use scissors to cut tassels on the ends. Wrap the scarf around each snowman's neck. Secure with a little white melted chocolate.
- 8** Sprinkle the base of the lid with a little coconut 'snow' and carefully invert the jar over the snowman, screwing it into the lid to create an edible snow globe.



The recipes on pages 101-102 are taken from *Sweet! Celebrations* by Elise Strachen, photography by Lauren Bamford, published by Murdoch Books. (RRP £20).



Snowflake biscuits

By Amy-Beth Ellice

Makes 20

110g (4oz) butter

75g (2½oz) soft light brown sugar

1 free-range egg

2½ tbsp golden syrup

350g (12oz) plain flour

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

3 tsp ground biscuits

FOR THE ROYAL ICING

500g (1lb 1oz) icing sugar

3 free-range egg whites

2 tsp lemon juice

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.
- 2 Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and beat well.
- 3 Sift the dry ingredients and add them gradually to the mixture. Add the syrup, mix well, then knead lightly.
- 4 Roll out the dough onto baking parchment 5mm (¼in) thick. Cut out dough using a snowflake shaped cutter. Line 2-3 baking trays with baking parchment and lift the snowflakes using a palette knife and place onto the baking sheets.
- 5 Bake in the oven for 10 minutes, then cool on a wire rack.
- 6 For the royal icing, whisk the egg whites until frothy. Gradually add the icing sugar, beating in well after each addition. Beat in the lemon juice until smooth.
- 7 Spoon the royal icing into a piping bag, snip the top, then ice the biscuits so they resemble snowflakes.



This recipe is taken from *Amy's Baking Year* by Amy-Beth Ellice, published by Metro Books.



Molasses fudge

By Billington's Unrefined Sugars (www.billingtons.co.uk)

Makes about 36 squares

FOR THE FUDGE

450g (1lb) Billingtons molasses sugar

200ml (7fl oz) double cream

150ml (5½fl oz) whole milk

125g (4½oz) unsalted butter

1 tsp vanilla extract

chopped/flaked almonds (optional)

- 1 Lightly oil a 20cm (8in) square cake tin. Place all the ingredients, except the vanilla and almonds, in a large heavy-based pan and heat slowly, stirring until the butter melts and the sugar dissolves.
- 2 Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat to a rapid simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, to prevent it catching on the base of the pan for 10-15 minutes. Remove from the heat, stir in the vanilla and leave to cool for 5 minutes.
- 3 Beat the mixture with a spoon for a few minutes until it starts to thicken and the gloss disappears. Carefully pour into the cake tin and leave to set at room temperature (do not put in the fridge). If you would like to mix in almonds, do so at this stage.
- 4 Once set, chop into squares and store in a sealed container.



Fig, apricot and nut biscotti

Recipe by Isidora Popovic, photography by Peter Cassidy

Makes about 28

FOR THE BISCOTTI

200g (7oz) plain flour

1½ tsp baking powder

100g (3½oz) golden caster sugar

30g (1oz) pistachio kernels

30g (1oz) hazelnuts

30g (1oz) sultanas raisins

4 dried apricots, quartered

4 dried figs, quartered

grated zest of 1 small lemon

2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten

- 1 Preheat the oven to 150°C/Gas Mark 2. Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.
- 2 Sift the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl. Stir in the sugar, pistachio nuts, hazelnuts, sultanas, apricots, figs and lemon zest. Pour in the eggs and mix well until you get a dough-like mixture. Bring the dough together into a ball in your hands, then transfer it to the baking sheet.
- 3 Flour your hands and roll the dough into a log. Flatten it so that it is about 8cm (3in) wide.
- 4 Bake in the oven for about 30 minutes. To check if it's ready, press very lightly on top of the log and if it springs back it is ready. When it is ready, remove from the oven and leave to cool for about 10 minutes.
- 5 Slice the log into 5mm (¼in) slices. Lay the slices on the baking sheet and return to the oven for 10 minutes, turning halfway through cooking. When they are pale gold, remove from the oven and leave to cool for a few minutes before serving.

Marzipan stars

Recipe by Hannah Miles, photography by William Reavell

Makes about 35

200g (7oz) marzipan

90g (3¼oz) unsalted butter, softened

60g (2oz) self-raising flour

120g (4oz) ground almonds

30g (1oz) almond meal

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp mixed spice

TO DECORATE

1 free-range egg white

100g (3½oz) icing sugar

a 5cm (2in) star-shaped cookie cutter

2 prepared baking sheets

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Line two baking sheets with baking parchment.
- 2 Break the marzipan into small pieces and put these in a bowl with the butter. Cream together until the mixture is paste-like. Sift in the flour and add the ground almonds, almond meal, vanilla extract and spices and beat to a smooth, soft dough. The mixture should be very soft, but not sticky, so add a little more flour if needed.
- 3 Dust a work surface with flour. Roll out the dough 1cm (½in) thick using a rolling pin. Use the cutter to stamp out 35 stars. Arrange the stars on the baking sheets a small distance apart. Bake in the oven for 10-15 minutes, until golden brown. Remove from the oven and leave to cool slightly on the sheet.
- 4 To ice, whisk the egg white to stiff peaks and sift in the icing sugar. Fold together until you have a smooth icing. Use a pastry brush to coat the tops of the cookies while they are still warm. Leave to set for 5 minutes, then apply a second coat of icing. Allow the icing to set completely before serving.
- 5 These cookies will keep for up to 2 weeks if stored in an airtight container.



This recipe and the biscotti on page 103 are taken from *Christmas Cookies to Make and Bake* by Ryland Peters & Small. Readers can buy the book for the special price of £7.99 including p&p (RRP £9.99) by telephoning Macmillan Direct on 01256 302699 and quoting reference HS4.



Peppermint candy sweets

By Baking Mad.com (www.bakingmad.com)

Makes 8

700g (1lb 8oz) icing sugar

2 free-range egg whites

100g (3½oz) liquid glucose

2 tsp peppermint extract

red food colouring

- 1 Place the icing sugar, egg whites, liquid glucose and peppermint extract into a food processor and mix together until it forms a firm ball, with a similar texture to plasticine. Add more icing sugar if needed to achieve the right consistency. Alternatively, whisk together by hand.
- 2 Lightly dust a work surface with icing sugar and knead the icing until smooth. Divide into two. Cover one piece with clingfilm.
- 3 Dip a cocktail stick into the red food colouring and dot onto the uncovered icing ball. Knead until the colour is even, adding more food colouring if a deeper shade is desired.
- 4 Divide both icing balls into 26 pieces and cover with clingfilm, then take one of each colour and roll out into thin sausages about 10cm (4in) long. Twist them together and gently roll into one even sausage, then bend the top around to make the cane, trimming the ends.
- 5 Place on a lined baking tray and repeat with the rest of the icing. Leave overnight to harden.



White chocolate and cranberry truffles

By Berry World (www.berryworld.com)

Makes approx 20

150g (5½oz) fresh cranberries

3 tbsp Cointreau

1 tsp grated orange zest

500g (1lb 1oz) white chocolate

600g (20fl oz) double cream

25g (1oz) unsalted butter

- 1 Place the cranberries, Cointreau and orange zest into a small pan, bring to a simmer and cook until softened and syrupy. Leave to cool.
- 2 Chop or break 300g (10½oz) chocolate into small pieces and put into a heatproof bowl. Place the cream and butter into a small saucepan, heat until just about to boil, pour over the chocolate and stir until melted. If the chocolate doesn't melt with the heat of the cream, place over a saucepan of simmering water for a few minutes and stir until it melts. Stir in the cranberries and leave to cool, then place in the fridge for 4 hours or overnight.
- 3 Scoop spoonfuls of the mix and roll into balls, then pop into the freezer for 30 minutes. Melt the remaining chocolate in a bowl over simmering water. Place each ball on a fork and dip into the melted chocolate, swirling around until coated. Place on a sheet of baking parchment, then leave to set in the fridge.



Ginger biscuits

By The National Trust (www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

Makes 12

150g (5oz) self-raising flour

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

2 tsp ground ginger

1 tsp ground cinnamon

2 tsp caster sugar

50g (2oz) butter

2 tbsp golden syrup

- 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C/Gas Mark 5 and line two baking sheets with baking parchment.
- 2 Sift together all the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Heat the butter and golden syrup gently in a pan and, when the butter has melted, pour it over the dry ingredients. Mix well until you have a soft dough. If it's a little bit sticky, sprinkle a little more flour onto it until you get a consistency you can handle.
- 3 Using your hands, form small balls of the mixture, flatten slightly, then place them on the baking sheets, spaced well apart. Bake for about 15 minutes until golden.
- 4 Remove from the oven and leave to cool for 5 minutes on the baking sheets, before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.



This recipe is taken from *Cakes, Bakes & Biscuits*, photography by Pavillion Books, published by National Trust Books.



Recipe taken from *Step-By-Step Desserts* by Caroline Bretherton and Kristan Raines. Published by DK. (RRP £20).

Raspberry and sea salt truffles

By Caroline Bretherton and Kristan Raines

Makes 26-30

180ml (6fl oz) double cream

225g (8oz) dark chocolate, finely grated

2 tbsp freeze-dried raspberries

½ tsp raspberry extract

FOR THE COATING

115g (4oz) dark chocolate, finely grated

1 tsp sea salt flakes

1 tbsp freeze-dried raspberries

110g (4oz) sugar

- 1 Heat the double cream and use it to melt the dark chocolate by placing the chocolate in a heatproof bowl, pouring the cream over the top and leaving it to melt. Whisk the mixture until smooth and glossy. Stir in the freeze-dried raspberries and the raspberry extract. Cool for 30 minutes.
- 2 Line a baking sheet with greaseproof paper. Spoon the ganache into two piping bags and snip off the ends. Pipe small, walnut-sized balls of ganache onto the baking sheet, spaced apart and leave to chill for 30 minutes. Roll each ball gently between your palms, until smooth. Place the truffles back on the sheet and chill for a further 30 minutes.
- 3 For the coating, melt the dark chocolate in a small, heatproof bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Line a baking sheet with greaseproof paper. Coat the truffles with the chocolate – place a truffle on a skewer and carefully dip it into the melted chocolate to coat. Allow any excess to drip back into the bowl, then place gently onto the lined sheet. Repeat for the remaining truffles.
- 4 Sprinkle half the truffles with sea salt flakes. Sprinkle the remaining truffles with the freeze-dried raspberries. Chill them for at least 1 hour before serving. You can store the truffles in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 week.

Festive drinks





Mulled wine

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Serves 4-6

750ml (1 1/4pt) bottle of red wine

60g (2oz) demerara sugar

1 cinnamon stick

a light grating of fresh nutmeg

2 star anise

1 orange, peeled, halved

60ml (2fl oz) sloe gin (optional)

star anise and sliced orange, to garnish (optional)

- 1 Place the wine, sugar, spices and orange in a large saucepan.
- 2 Heat gently until the sugar has dissolved. Taste; add a little more sugar if needed.
- 3 Remove from the heat and stir in the sloe gin, if using.
- 4 Using a small sieve or tea strainer, strain into heatproof glasses. Garnish with the star anise and orange, if using. Serve immediately.

Non-alcoholic eggnog

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Serves 6

4 free-range eggs, beaten

4 tbsp caster sugar

1 tsp ground allspice

150ml (5 1/2fl oz) vanilla syrup

400ml (14fl oz) full fat milk

cinnamon sticks, to decorate (optional)

freshly grated nutmeg, to garnish

- 1 Place the eggs and sugar in a bowl and whisk until combined.
- 2 Add the allspice, vanilla syrup and milk and whisk until combined. Cover with clingfilm and chill for 30 minutes.
- 3 Gently whisk again and strain into glasses.
- 4 Add a cinnamon stick, if desired, and finish with a light grating of nutmeg.



Cranberry punch

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Makes approx. 1.5 litres (2½pt)

500ml (18fl oz) cranberry juice

500ml (18fl oz) pineapple juice

165g (5¾oz) granulated sugar

1 tsp almond extract

500ml (18fl oz) ginger beer

ice cubes (optional)

- 1 In a very large bowl, stir together the cranberry and pineapple juice, sugar and almond extract until the sugar is dissolved. Chill for 1 hour.
- 2 Add the ginger beer, stir gently and serve into glasses, adding ice cubes if desired.



Christmas cookie

By Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk)

Serves 2

2 ginger biscuits, crushed

60ml (2fl oz) peppermint schnapps

30ml (1fl oz) Kahlúa

90ml (3fl oz) Baileys

60ml (2fl oz) Amarula

ice cubes

- 1 Place two martini glasses in the fridge for 30 minutes.
- 2 Place the ginger biscuits onto a saucer. Pour a small amount of cold water onto a separate saucer. To decorate the glasses, dip the rims into the water, then into the biscuit crumbs.
- 3 Place the peppermint schnapps, Kahlúa, Baileys and Amarula into a cocktail shaker. Top up with ice cubes, shake well, then strain into the glasses.

Sparkling cosmopolitan

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Serves 2

75ml (2¾fl oz) Grey Goose Vodka
1 tbsp orange liqueur
a squeeze of fresh lime juice
100ml (3½fl oz) cranberry juice
sparkling wine
cranberries, to serve

- 1 Stir together the vodka, orange liqueur, lime and cranberry juice.
- 2 Pour into two Champagne flutes and top up with sparkling wine. Drop in a few fresh cranberries and serve.

Festive martini

By Waitrose (www.waitrose.com)

Serves 2

75ml (2¾oz) Grey Goose Vodka
1-2 tsp dark brown muscovado sugar
2 whole cloves
½ a cinnamon stick
2 slices of fresh root ginger
5 ice cubes
2 tsp dry vermouth
2 orange peel twists, to serve

- 1 Stir together the vodka, sugar, cloves, cinnamon and fresh ginger in a jug and chill for up to 24 hours until the sugar has dissolved.
- 2 Add the infused vodka to a shaker along with the ice cubes and the vermouth and shake well together. Strain into two small martini glasses and serve each with a twist of orange peel.



Thousands of recipes can be found online @ www.waitrose.com



Gin and blueberry twist

By Berryworld (www.berryworld.com)

Makes 4

150g (5½oz) blueberries
1 tbsp caster sugar
juice of ½ a small lemon
2 grinds of black pepper
120ml (4fl oz) gin
30ml (1fl oz) Limoncello
ice
soda water

- 1 Put the blueberries, caster sugar and lemon in a cocktail shaker and mash with the end of a rolling pin.
- 2 Add the black pepper, gin, Limoncello and some ice, then shake well.
- 3 Put a large ice cube into each glass along with 3 blueberries and pour the cocktail in through a sieve. Top up with soda water.



Mixed berries mulled wine

By Seasonal Berries (www.seasonalberries.co.uk)

Serves 8-10

1 large orange
125g (4½oz) caster sugar
6 cloves
2 cinnamon sticks
¼ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
1 vanilla pod, halved lengthways
2 bottles of red wine
50ml (2fl oz) brandy
200g (7oz) mixed berries

- 1 Pare the zest off the orange in thin strips and squeeze the juice. Place the orange zest and juice in a large saucepan with the sugar, spices and vanilla pod. Add just enough red wine to cover the ingredients. Heat gently, stirring, until the sugar has dissolved. Boil rapidly until the wine has reduced and become syrupy.
- 2 Add the rest of the wine, brandy and the mixed berries. Gently simmer for 2 minutes; do not boil. Serve in heatproof glasses.



Spiced chocolate martini

By Zuza Zak

Serves 1

50g (1¾oz) good-quality dark chocolate

50ml (2fl oz) single cream

a large pinch of ground cinnamon, plus extra to serve

100ml (3½fl oz) cardamom-infused vodka

- 1 Place the chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of gently simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl doesn't touch the water. As soon as it has melted, remove from the heat and whisk in the cream and cinnamon.
- 2 Allow to cool completely, before shaking it in a cocktail shaker with the vodka over ice, then pour it into a martini glass. Alternatively, shake in a jam jar and strain into a glass.
- 3 Sprinkle over a little more ground cinnamon before serving.



Creamy mulled beer

By Zuza Zak

Serves 4

4 cans of light beer

1 tbsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp cloves

3 free-range eggs, separated

a pinch of salt

2 tbsp light brown sugar

2 tbsp honey

1 tbsp vanilla extract

1 tbsp brandy

- 1 Put the beer, cinnamon and cloves into a pan and place over a very gentle heat, stirring continuously. Once it is warm (but not hot), cover, remove from the heat and allow it to infuse with the spices for 10 minutes.
- 2 Whisk the egg whites with a pinch of salt until stiff peaks form. Blend the yolks with the sugar in a separate bowl until creamy. Once the yolk mixture is smooth, add the honey.
- 3 Blend the egg yolk mixture with the whisked egg whites, then start to slowly pour the mixture into the warm beer. Do not let the mixture get too hot, or you will end up with sweet scrambled eggs in your beer. Once the eggs are incorporated into the beer, stir for a couple of minutes or so over a low heat.
- 4 Add the vanilla extract and brandy right at the end, just before turning the heat off. Cover the pan and leave for a few more minutes before serving – it should be warm, but not boiling.



The recipes on this page are taken from *Polska* by Zuza Zak, published by Quadrille. (RRP £25).



Charred blood orange mimosa

By Gizzi Erskine
Makes 4

6 ripe blood oranges
a small knob of unsalted butter
1 tsp caster sugar (optional)
1 bottle of medium-dry prosecco

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6.
- 2 Cut the oranges in half. Put the butter into a large frying pan and get it really hot. Place the oranges flat side down in the pan and leave to char for 5-10 minutes. You want to get them nice and black. Once this is done, put the oranges into a roasting tray and roast for about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with sugar, if desired. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.
- 3 Half-fill your champagne flutes with the juice from the oranges (approximately 75ml (2½ fl oz) per glass) and top up with chilled prosecco. Serve immediately.



Recipe taken from *Gizzi's Season's Eatings: Feasts & Celebrations from Halloween to Happy New Year* by Gizzi Erskine, published by Mitchell Beazley. (RRP £25).



Crickets of the night

By Jesse Carr
Serves 1

30ml (1 fl oz) crème de cacao
20ml (¾ fl oz) crème de menthe
10ml (¼ fl oz) absinthe
30ml (1 fl oz) double cream
a small handful of mint, plus extra to garnish

15ml (½ fl oz) cognac
ice cubes
good-quality dark chocolate shavings, 60% cocoa

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT
coupe glass
cocktail shaker
tea strainer

- 1 About 5 minutes before making the cocktail, place the glass in the freezer.
- 2 Remove the glass from the freezer. Pour the liquid ingredients into the shaker. Add the mint, then fill the shaker with ice cubes.
- 3 Place the lid on the shaker; then shake hard for about 20 seconds until you hear the ice crushing.
- 4 Place a tea strainer over the glass. Double-strain the cocktail by pouring it through the shaker's integral shaker, then through the tea strainer into the glass.
- 5 Serve immediately, topped with dark chocolate shavings and a sprig of mint.



Recipe taken from *Chocolate* by Dom Ramsey, published by DK. (RRP £14.99).



Spiced mulled cider

By Hobbs House Bakery (www.hobbshousebakery.co.uk)

Serves 10

4 ltrs (7pts) of your favourite medium cider

200ml (7fl oz) brandy

5 tbsp honey

5 star anise

5 pieces of lemon peel

1 tsp allspice berries

1 tsp blade mace

4 cinnamon sticks

1 vanilla pod, split

1 tsp coriander seeds, lightly crushed

1 tsp ground ginger

1 tsp juniper berries

½ tsp dried chilli flakes

½ tsp cloves

- 1 Pour the cider into a large saucepan, then add all the remaining ingredients.
- 2 Warm over a gentle heat until just hot, but not simmering. Leave to sit at this gentle heat for 30 minutes until the spices have infused into the cider, but the alcohol is still intact!
- 3 Serve nice and hot.



Seasons greetings Champagne cocktail

By Edd Kimber (www.theboywhobakes.co.uk)

Serves 2

75ml (2¾fl oz) clementine juice

50ml (1¾fl oz) vodka

4 dashes of orange bitter

fresh rosemary, to garnish

Champagne, to serve

clementine peel, to garnish

- 1 Place the clementine juice, vodka and bitters into a shaker filled with ice and shake vigorously.
- 2 Strain between 2 glasses and top with Champagne. Garnish with fresh rosemary and a strip of clementine peel.

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Click-Twist Brushes

Edible Confetti



Paint It! Food Paints



Edible Glue



Edible Glitters



Colour Flo Liquid Colours

ProGel Concentrated Colours

Adding Colour & Sparkle To Your Festive Season

Available from all good cake decorating shops