



BASIC CAKE RECIPES

Chocolate Mud Cake

Ingredients

Makes a tall 8 inch round cake or shorter 8 inch square cake

225g	Unsalted butter, softened
190g	Dark chocolate (try to use couverture chocolate, it has fewer additives)
60ml	Water
1 teaspoon	Vanilla essence
1.5 Tablespoon	Instant coffee powder (optional)
1 Tablespoon	Honey (optional)
150g	Self-raising flour (see our replacements page if you can't get this)
110g	Plain flour
30g	Cocoa powder
400g	Caster sugar
4	Eggs
100ml	Milk

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C / 320°F. Grease the cake tin and line it with baking paper.
2. Melt butter, dark chocolate, water, vanilla essence, instant coffee powder and honey in a heat-proof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Stir lightly to mix evenly with a spatula. Leave aside to cool.
3. Sift self-raising flour, plain flour and cocoa powder into a separate bowl. Add caster sugar and mix well with a wooden spoon.
4. Add eggs into milk and lightly whisk together. Pour egg mixture into the dry ingredients, and fold in immediately with a wooden spoon until completely incorporated.
5. Pour the chocolate mixture into the batter and fold in together until well combined.
6. Pour mixture into the cake tin and bake until a skewer comes out clean when inserted into the centre of the cake. This will take around 60-90 minutes depending how high you are baking the cake.
7. Leave the cake to cool in the tin for 30 minutes. Remove from the tin and leave to cool completely on wire racks.

Vanilla Cake

This recipe has been slightly modified to make it simpler so it may be slightly different from the one on my website.

Ingredients

Makes a tall 8 inch round cake or shorter 8 inch square cake

- 350 g Unsalted butter, softened
- 365 g Caster sugar
- 2 tsp Vanilla paste / essence
- 350 g Egg whites (approx 9 eggs)
- 120 g Plain flour
- 355 g Self-raising flour (see our replacements page if you can't get this)
- A pinch Salt
- 165 ml Buttermilk (see our replacements page if you can't get this)

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C / 355°F. Grease the cake tin and line it with baking paper on the bottom and sides.
2. Sift plain flour, self-raising flour and salt into a bowl.
3. Using an electric stand mixer with paddle attachment, cream butter and caster sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the vanilla paste into the creamed mixture. Mix well.
4. Set the mixer to low speed and gradually add half of the egg whites into the mixture, doing so in three batches, scraping down the mixing bowl after each addition.
5. Add one quarter of the dry ingredients to the mixture. Beat over low speed until well combined and scrape down the bowl.
6. Gradually add the remaining egg whites into the mixture, beating well and scraping down the mixing bowl after each addition. Add remaining dry ingredients into the mixture in two batches. Beat until well incorporated, scraping down the mixing bowl between each addition. Set the mixer to medium speed, and beat mixture for 10 seconds.
7. Add the buttermilk into the mixture over low speed. Set the mixer to medium speed, and beat for 30 seconds until well combined.
8. Pour mixture into the cake tin and bake until a skewer comes out clean after being inserted into the centre of the cake. This will take around 60-70 minutes for an 8 inch square cake. Leave the cake to cool in the tin for 15 minutes. Remove from the tin and leave to cool completely on wire racks.

Flavour Options

Vanilla Cake

- Chocolate - Add 4-5 Tablespoons of cocoa powder to the flour mix. Depending on how strong your cocoa powder is, you might want to adjust to taste.
- Green tea - As above, add a couple of Tablespoons of green tea powder to taste.
- Lemon - Add the zest of 1 lemon and 1 Tablespoon of lemon essence.
- Strawberry - Add 3-4 Tablespoons of strawberry powder or flavouring
- Coffee - Add 1-2 Tablespoons of coffee essence.

Chocolate Mud Cake

- Choc orange - boil an orange in simmering water for an hour or until the skin becomes really soft. Blend the whole orange and mix the pulp into the batter at the end.
- Choc mint - add 1-2 Tablespoons of mint essence.
- White chocolate - replace the dark chocolate with white chocolate, remove cocoa and coffee powder.

Simple replacements

Buttermilk

- Replace 1 cup of buttermilk with one cup of soured milk. Start with 1 tablespoon of lemon juice or plain white vinegar and fill to 1 cup total using milk. Stir to combine and sit for 5-10 minutes before using.

Self-raising flour

- This is hard to find in some countries. It is plain flour with baking powder already mixed in. It is different to self-rising flour found in the US, which also has salt.
- To replace, for each 1 cup of self raising flour get 1 cup of plain flour and 1.5 teaspoons of baking powder. Whisk well to combine before using.
- Since our recipes use weight, this is about 1 tsp per 100g of flour. As always you may need to adjust if your baking powder is a little old and lost some power.

Before you get started...

Ingredients

- Ensure all your ingredients are at room temperature. This will allow all of them to blend together nicely and give you a much better result instead of seizing or curdling the batter.
- You don't need the most expensive ingredients but you do need real ingredients. This means using butter, not margarine or using chocolate not candy melts.

Adjustments

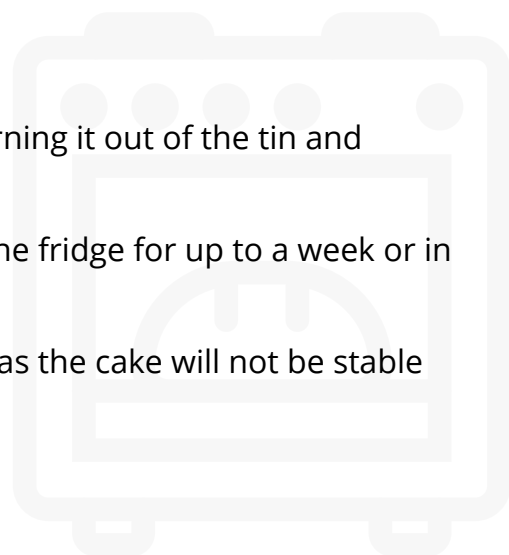
- Try the recipes as they are the first time before you make adjustments.
- Whenever you wish to alter the recipe try to only change one ingredient at a time. That way when something goes wrong, you know exactly what it was rather than guessing which ingredient you changed caused the problem.
- If you are increasing or reducing any of the ingredients, change the ingredient amounts slowly. I usually add or deduct no more than 10-20% at a time or else you can risk changing the cake structure entirely.
- If you need to make dietary adjustments, you can replace the flours with gluten free flour or the milk with lactose free milk or non dairy milk. However, please do a test batch first. Some of these ingredients may need further adjustments in order to produce the same results.
- As much as I can, I try and use dry flavourings (like dehydrated powders) or flavouring essences/pastes to change the flavor of my cakes. These will not change the consistency of the recipe so it reduces the chances of things going wrong.
- If you are adding or making extreme changes like switching out a dry ingredient for a wet one or introducing a lot of liquid (fruit purees or juices for example), this can potentially change the aroma, structure and appearance of the finished cake. For example, the cake might bake more dense, shorter than expected or even crumblier so it's important to do a test batch first and then adjust the recipe if necessary (such as adding more flour to balance out all the moisture in the recipe).

The Baking Process

- Every oven is different. Therefore, cooking temperatures and times may need to be adjusted. Some ovens have hot spots, fans, no fans, leaks or even uneven cooking speeds.
- Depending on your oven, you might want to consider baking the cakes in 2 short tins instead of 1 taller tin. If you bake in shorter tins, you will need to reduce the cooking time.
- It is important to ensure your oven is preheated so it reaches the required temperature before the batter is placed in it to ensure steady baking. How long does an oven take to preheat? It really depends on the type and condition of your oven, but a good 30 minutes is standard.
- Do not over pack your oven. This may be tempting because you want to fit as many cakes in there as possible but it can cause a lot of problems. If an oven is being filled with a large number of products, it will prevent movement of air between all the products that are being baked. This will cause the temperature to fall and the products may not bake evenly or take longer than normal to bake.
- If you notice the top of the cake developing a crust or browning really quickly, simply wrap the top of the tin with aluminium foil. You can also wrap the outside of the tin with a wet cloth to help distribute the heat better and give you a more even rise.
- Do not disturb the cake while baking. Avoid opening the oven door frequently, especially before the product's final structure is set in the oven. This changes the temperature stability in the oven and may affect the baking process.

Cooling and Storage

- Wait until the cake is at room temperature before turning it out of the tin and wrapping it up.
- Wrap the cake tightly with cling wrap and store it in the fridge for up to a week or in the freezer for up to 3-4 months.
- Do not bake and decorate the cake on the same day as the cake will not be stable enough.



Definitions of Some Basic Techniques

Beating/Whisking

This can be done by hand with a whisk or with an electric mixer. The aim is to have moderate fast movement which introduces air and increases the volume of the mixture.

Creaming

Usually used to describe the blending of butter and sugar while incorporating air so the mixture becomes lighter.

Fold

Combining ingredients together gently with a spatula. This is done in a gentle and light manner to avoid losing the air incorporated. It is important to do this by hand so that the batter is not overworked.

Scrape

Using a spatula to scrape down the sides of a bowl during mixing. This is important as it ensures the proper combination of ingredients and consistency within the mixture.



Troubleshooting

Cake Collapses

- The ingredients were weighed incorrectly (too little flour, too much liquid, or too little leavening)
- The ingredients were not mixed properly
- Incorrect oven temperature
- The centre of the cake is not cooked through, so it collapses when it cools

Uneven Shape

- The ingredients were not mixed properly
- Uneven oven heat
- Oven racks not level
- Cake pans are warped

Cracked Top

- The ingredients were weighed incorrectly (too little flour, too much liquid, or too little leavening)
- Flour used has high protein content
- Oven temperature was too high

Soggy

- Under-baked
- Wrapping cake before completely cooled

Tough/Dry

- Flour used has high protein content
- Over-mixing after adding flour into mixture
- Cake is over-baked



