

Victoria Sponge Cake

Victoria sponges are always made with equal quantities of butter, sugar, flour and eggs. In my opinion, the best way to make a Victorian sponge is to mix all the ingredients by hand; the Kenwood will work well but the end result can be over beaten and too rigid.

- § 4 free range eggs
- § 270g unsalted butter – softened but not melted
- § 270g castor sugar
- § 270g self-raising flour
- § Pinch salt
- § 1 teaspoon vanilla essence
- § 4 tablespoons of your best jam
- § Icing sugar to dust the top of the cake

Set the oven to 180°C/360°F/Ga 4. Grease two 20cm sandwich cake tins with a scrap of butter on some kitchen paper. Line the bases with circles of baking parchment.

In a large mixing bowl, beat or 'cream' the butter with a wooden spoon until very soft, slowly beat in the sugar – keep beating until the mixture becomes 'fluffy'. Beat the eggs in one at a time, beat in the vanilla extract.

Set a sieve over the mixing bowl and tip in salt and flour. Fold the flour into the cake mixture using a tablespoon. Continue folding until the consistency is such that when you scoop up a tablespoon of mix and turn it upside down over the bowl it should drop down reasonably easily. If it's too firm, add a tablespoon or two of milk.

Spoon the mixture equally between the 2 prepared cake tins and gently smooth the tops with a knife.

Put the cakes into the pre-heated oven on the middle shelf and bake 25-30 minutes.

The cakes are ready when you can stick a knife into the centre and it comes out clean.

Carefully remove from the oven, hold the tins about 6 inches from the work surface and drop them – this allows steam inside the cake to come out and stops it from sinking.

Leave to cool for a few minutes, run a knife around the edge to loosen from the tins and then turn them out onto a wire rack.

When cool, turn the cakes upside down so the flat surface is uppermost and place on a serving plate. Spread with jam, sandwich together and dust the top with icing sugar.