THE BEST EVER
CHRISTMAS CAKE
By Alison Petruccio and her mum, Pauline.

There are so many happy memories associated with this cake for me. And whenever I’m setting out the ingredients I always think of Mum. Alison x

INGREDIENTS

275g flour
Pinch of salt
½ teaspoon baking powder
Teaspoon of mixed spice
Teaspoon of ground cinnamon
Tablespoon of cocoa powder
850g of mixed dried fruit
115g currants
400g chopped glace cherries
225g dark soft brown sugar
100g blanched chopped almonds

225g softened butter
4 eggs beaten
Finely grated rind and juice of one lemon
Finely grated rind and juice of one orange
15ml of black treacle
100ml brandy
A little milk (if necessary)

Please turn over for the method.
METHOD

1. Sift the flour and salt into a large mixing bowl and stir in the cinnamon, mixed spice, cocoa powder and baking powder. Add the sultanas, currants, dried fruit, glace cherries and nuts and mix together. Set aside for as long as you can.

2. Cream together the butter and sugar in a bowl until fluffy. Beat in the eggs, a little at a time. Fold in half of the flour and fruit mixture, then fold in the remainder and stir in the orange and lemon juice. Add the rind, black treacle and brandy. Mix well, adding a splash of milk if dry.

3. With greaseproof paper, double line and grease a 20cm/18 inch round or square cake tin. Then pour in your cake mixture and make a slight indentation in the centre. Bake in a cool oven (150°C) for an hour then reduce to very cool (140°C) and continue baking for a further 3 to 3½ hours, or until a metal skewer pushed into the middle of the cake comes out clean. If the top looks like it’s getting too brown during the cooking, you can cover it with greaseproof paper or foil.

4. Remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin before turning out and carefully peeling off the paper. Mum would make her own marzipan and royal icing and there are lots of recipes online if you want to do the same. But I always buy mine. Sorry mum!

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