BROWN'S HOTEL 185ᵀᴴ ANNIVERSARY RECIPE: BATTENBERG CAKE

Battenberg Cake – A History Of

Tales recount the Victorian royal marriage of Queen Victoria's granddaughter, Princess Victoria of Hesse-Darmstadt and Prince Louis of Battenberg in 1884 when, to celebrate the important occasion, the 'Battenberg cake' was created.

British pastry chefs took inspiration from their German counterparts and used marzipan, colours, shapes and allegorical designs to create the cake that was presented in honour of the prestigious event.

The earliest recipe known to be published was that of Frederick Vine in 1898 a famous British food writer and respected baker of the time. In the same year English culinary entrepreneur Agnes Bertha Marshall published a 'Domino Cake' featuring the classic check pattern cake, wrapped in marzipan. Regardless of its origins, the Battenberg Cake is widely regarded as a true British classic and can still be found in patisserie shops and tea rooms across the country.

The Recipe

Vanilla Sponge
210g finest unsalted butter
210g castor sugar
4 medium eggs
170g plain flour
60g finely ground almonds
10g baking powder
½ tsp vanilla extract

Pink Sponge
210g finest unsalted butter
210g castor sugar
4 medium eggs
170g plain flour
60g finely ground almonds
10g baking powder
½ tsp natural red food colour

800g golden marzipan
200g apricot jam

The Method

- Grease and line a 20cm square cake tin and preheat your oven to 180°C.
- In a bowl, cream the room temperature butter with the sugar until pale in colour and light and fluffy.
- Lightly beat the eggs and add to the above mixture gradually whilst continuing to mix.
- Once all the egg has been mixed thoroughly add the dry ingredients and mix well.
- Spread evenly in your square tin and bake for 20 – 25 minutes or until firm to touch. You can use a skewer to test if the sponge is ready by placing it into the middle of the cake, then removing it and seeing if it appears clean.
Repeat the above method for the pink sponge, adding the colouring at the end.
Leave the cakes to cool on wire racks before assembling them.

To Assemble

- Trim the two cakes flat and spread one cake with a thin layer of warmed apricot jam.
- Place one cake on top of the other and press down firmly with a chopping board.
- Trim the edge of the cake so it is straight, then cut strips of cake, the same width as the height of one of your sponges, approximately 3cm. Spread the apricot jam on top of one of these strips, then alternate the layers with another sponge strip on top. Leave to firm in the fridge whilst you repeat the process.
- Roll out your marzipan with sugar to stop it from sticking to a thickness of 5mm.
- Spread with apricot jam and roll your now -four panel cake up so all 4 sides are covered.
- Place in an airtight container and leave to firm up for two hours before serving.