

Simnel cake

For a 7 inch (18cm) tin

Make almond paste (marzipan) by mixing 4oz (25gms) caster sugar with 4oz ground almonds and ½ teaspoon almond essence. Use enough of 1 egg, beaten, to make a dough, knead and roll out 1/3 of this to make a 7 inch circle.

For the cake, cream 4oz (125gm) butter with 4 oz soft brown sugar. Gradually add 3 beaten eggs, beaten and then mix in 5oz (150gm) plain flour,¼ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon mixed spice,12 oz mixed dried fruit, 2 oz chopped mixed peel, grated rind of a lemon.

Put half the mixture into the cake tin and put the almond paste circle on top; add the rest of the mixture and bake in a 140o oven for 1 ½ -2 hours. When cool brush top with jam. Make 11 small balls of the remaining paste and roll out the rest to cover the top on which they sit; brush with beaten egg. Bake for another 10 minutes in 180o oven.
(The 11 balls are the apostles, less Judas.)

Easter biscuits

Cream 4oz butter with 4oz caster sugar. Beat in 1 egg yolk and fold in 8oz plain flour,2 oz currants, 1oz chopped mixed peel. Mix well, then gradually add milk to for stiff dough.Roll out to about 1/8inch(3mm) thick and cut into 2inch(5cm) rounds. Arrange on a greased baking sheet and bake in a 170o oven for 15-20 minutes. Take out to brush over with egg white and sprinkle with caster sugar. Return to oven for up to 10 minutes. Put on a wire rack to cool. This makes about 24 crisp biscuits.