

MEN'S BAKE-OFF RECIPE

DELIA SMITH'S CLASSIC SPONGE CAKE

(GENTLEMEN NO HELPING HANDS OR DEVIATION FROM RECIPE PLEASE!)

INGREDIENTS

- 115g self-raising flour
- 1 level teaspoon baking powder
- 115g spreadable butter
- 115g golden caster sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

TO FINISH:

- Preserves, etc (see end of method)
- icing sugar for dusting

METHOD

Pre-heat the oven to 170C, gas mark 3

All you do is sift the flour and baking powder into a roomy mixing bowl, lifting the sieve quite high to give the flour a good airing as it goes down, then simply add all the other ingredients.

Now, using an electric hand whisk, combine them for about 1 minute until you have a smooth creamy consistency. Next divide the mixture between the two prepared tins, level off using the back of a tablespoon, and bake near the centre of the oven for about 25 minutes. The cakes are cooked when you press lightly with your little finger and the centre springs back. Remove them from the oven and after about 30 seconds loosen the edges by sliding a palette knife all round them out onto a wire cooling tray.

Now carefully peel back the lining by gently pulling it back. Lightly place the other cooling tray on top and just flip them both over so that the tops are facing upwards (this is to prevent them sticking to the tray). When cooled, sandwich them together with any sort of preserve or lemon curd, with or without fresh whipped cream (in the summer, fresh berries and cream make a superb filling). For a final flourish, dust the whole cake generously with icing sugar. Store in a tin, or if you are using cream, in a polythene box in the fridge.

EQUIPMENT

You will need 2 18cm by 4cm Round Sponge Tins with Loose Base, lightly buttered and bases lined, plus two wire cooling trays.