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CLASSIC CREAM SCONES

Scones have been essential to the tea-time tradition since the mid-nineteenth century when, according to legend, the fashionable Duchess of Bedford ordered her servants to sneak the small cakes and hot tea into her room for an afternoon snack. In time, she began inviting her friends to join her for afternoon tea, and this homey ritual became a social trend. Queen Victoria, hearing of the new convention, soon began hosting fancy-dress tea parties. The tradition continued into the twentieth century, with Mrs Patmore serving scones to Lord and Lady Grantham at her bed-and-breakfast in season 6 of *Downton Abbey*.

250 g (2 cups) self-raising flour,
plus extra for the work surface
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons caster sugar, plus
1 tablespoon for sprinkling
1 teaspoon salt
70 g (½ cup) currants
200 ml (¾ cup, plus
2 tablespoons) double cream

FOR THE TOPPING

1 egg white, lightly beaten
with 1 teaspoon water

MAKES 10 SCONES



TEA ETIQUETTE

A scone should always be torn in two rather than cut with a knife, which would make the scone seem heavy.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Have ready an ungreased baking tray.

In a large bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, the 2 teaspoons sugar and salt. Stir in the currants and cream until just combined. Using your hands, gently gather the dough together, kneading it against the side of the bowl until it holds together in a rough ball.

Lightly flour a work surface and turn the dough out onto it. Roll out the dough about 2 cm (¾ inch) thick. Using a 7.5-cm (3-inch) round cutter, cut out rounds from the dough, pressing straight down and lifting straight up and spacing them as closely together as possible. Place the dough rounds at least 5 cm (2 inches) apart on the baking tray. Gather up the dough trimmings, knead briefly on the floured work surface, roll out the dough again, cut out more rounds, and add them to the tray.

Using a pastry brush, lightly brush the tops of the scones with the egg white mixture, then sprinkle evenly with the remaining sugar.

Bake the scones until golden, 10–12 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Serve warm or at room temperature with butter, clotted cream and jam.



WELSH CAKES

The texture of these Welsh cakes lies between that of a pancake and that of a biscuit or scone. This version is slightly sweeter than the traditional one and is delicious for both breakfast and tea time, especially on 1st March, the feast day of Saint David, the patron saint of Wales. Serve them straight from the griddle as they are or sprinkled with icing or cinnamon sugar.

190 g (1½ cups) plain flour, plus extra for the work surface
50 g (¼ cup) caster sugar
1¼ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
Pinch of ground nutmeg (optional)
115 g (½ cup) cold unsalted butter, diced, plus extra for cooking
45 g (½ cup) currants
1 egg, lightly beaten
60 ml (¼ cup) milk

MAKES 10 SMALL CAKES

In a food processor, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and nutmeg (if using) and process until blended, about 5 seconds. Scatter the butter over the flour mixture and process until it resembles coarse crumbs, 8–10 seconds. Transfer the mixture into a bowl and stir in the currants. Pour the egg and milk over the top and, using a rubber spatula and one hand, mix and pinch until all the ingredients come together in a soft, slightly sticky dough.

Scrape the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and press into a round, about 12 mm (½ inch) thick, lightly flouring as necessary. Using a 5.5-cm (2¼-inch) round cutter, cut out as many rounds as possible. Gather together the trimmings and repeat. You should have a total of 10 rounds.

Heat a griddle or a cast-iron frying pan over a medium-low heat. Drop a small piece of butter onto the hot surface and spread to coat the surface. Add as many cakes as will fit without crowding and cook until deep golden brown on the bottom, about 4 minutes. Reduce the heat if over-browning. Flip the cakes and continue cooking until they are puffed, the underside is golden brown, and the sides no longer look wet, 4–5 minutes longer, adjusting the heat if necessary.

Transfer the cakes to a wire rack and leave to cool for 5 minutes before serving. Repeat with the remaining cakes, adding more butter to the griddle as needed. Serve warm.





BATTENBERG CAKE

Also known as a domino cake or church window cake, this almond-flavoured checkerboard-style confection was named in honour of the 1884 marriage of Queen Victoria's granddaughter Victoria to Prince Louis of Battenberg. Because of anti-German sentiment in Britain during World War I, the Prince gave up his German name and dynastic titles in 1917 and took an English name, Mountbatten (the surname of his grandson, Prince Philip).

FOR THE CAKE

170 g (¾ cup) unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus extra for the tin and foil

170 g (1½ cups) self-raising flour, plus extra for the tin and foil

40 g (½ cup) ground almonds

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

200 g (1 cup) caster sugar

3 eggs, at room temperature

¾ teaspoon vanilla extract

½ teaspoon almond extract

60 ml (¼ cup) milk

1–3 drops red or pink food colouring

FOR ASSEMBLY

105 g (½ cup) apricot jam

Icing sugar, for dusting

200 g (7 oz) marzipan (preferably white)

SERVES 8–10

To make the cake, preheat the oven to 165°C/325°F/Gas Mark 3. Lightly butter the bottom and sides of a 20-cm (8-inch) square cake tin with 5-cm (2-inch) sides. Cut a 20 x 30-cm (8 x 12-inch) rectangle of aluminium foil. Fold it in half crossways to create a 20 x 15-cm (8 x 6-inch) rectangle. Fold both ends towards the centrefold to make an edge 5 cm (2 inches) high from the centre. Crease the edges of the folds (top and both bottom) firmly and unfold the sides. It will look like an upside-down T. Arrange the foil sheet in the greased tin (the centre fold will divide the tin into two separate sections each 20 by 10 cm/8 by 4 inches). Lightly butter the foil and flour the sides of the tin and the foil.

In a bowl, mix the self-raising flour, ground almonds, baking powder and salt together. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the butter on a medium speed until smooth, about 1 minute. Increase the speed to medium-high, add the caster sugar and beat until fluffy and light in colour, 2–3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition and add the vanilla and almond extracts along with the final egg. On a low speed, add half of the flour mixture and mix just until blended, then add the milk and mix again. Add the remaining flour and mix just until blended.

Divide the mixture in half (about 400 g/14 oz each). Scrape half of the mixture into one side of the divided tin and spread evenly. Add 1 drop of the food colouring to the remaining mixture and fold until evenly coloured, adding more food colouring as needed to achieve the pink intensity desired. Scrape the pink mixture into the other side of the tin and spread evenly.

Recipe continues on the following page



MINI VICTORIA SPONGE CAKES

Also known as a Victoria sandwich, the Queen's actual tea-time sponge cake would have been sandwiched with only a thick layer of raspberry jam and topped with a sprinkle of sugar. The earliest recipe for this buttery vanilla-infused cake appeared in *Mrs Beeton's Household Management*, published in London in 1861. The addition of a layer of whipped cream or buttercream is a recent innovation but one that the Grantham family would likely have enjoyed.

FOR THE CAKE

225 g (1 cup) unsalted butter,
at room temperature, plus extra
for the ramekins

250 g (2 cups) self-raising flour,
plus extra for the ramekins

1½ teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

200 g (1 cup) caster sugar

4 large eggs, at room
temperature

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

FOR THE FILLING

300 ml (1¼ cups) double cream

2 tablespoons icing sugar

210 g (¾ cup) raspberry or
strawberry jam

Icing sugar, for dusting

MAKES 12 SMALL CAKES

To make the cakes, put a 29 x 43-cm (11 x 17-inch) baking tray in the oven and preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Lightly butter the bottom and sides of twelve 180-ml (¾-cup) straight-sided ramekins or a 12-hole mini sandwich tin.

In a small bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder and salt. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the butter on a medium speed until smooth, about 1 minute. Add the caster sugar, increase the speed to medium-high, and beat until fluffy and lighter in colour, 2–3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition and adding the vanilla along with the final egg. On a low speed, add the flour mixture and mix just until blended.

Divide the mixture evenly among the ramekins or mini sandwich holes (a slightly rounded 60 ml/¼ cup each) and spread evenly. Transfer the ramekins or mini sandwich tin to the baking tray and bake until a skewer inserted into the centre of a cake or two comes out clean, about 17–19 minutes.

Transfer the baking tray to a wire rack and leave the cakes to cool for 15 minutes. Run a thin-bladed knife around the inside of each ramekin to loosen the cake sides, then invert the ramekin onto a wire rack, lift it off and turn the cake right side up. If using a mini sandwich tin, loosen the cake sides the same way, then invert the tin onto a rack, lift off the tin and turn the cakes right side up. (If the holes have removable bottoms, push up to release the cakes.) Leave the cakes to cool completely.

Recipe continues on the following page



LEMON TARTS

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, lemon curd had a prominent place on the afternoon tea table as the preferred alternative to jam. It was a precious choice as well because, unlike jam, the egg-based curd needed refrigeration for long-term storage. Here, spooned into small, crisp tart shells, it becomes the ideal filling for a quintessential tea-time offering.

FOR THE TART PASTRY

155 g (1¼ cups) plain flour, plus more for rolling

3 tablespoons caster sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

140 g (10 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter, cubed

1 egg yolk

1 tablespoon ice-cold water, or more if needed

250 g (1 cup) Lemon Curd (page 134)

Fresh berries, thin lemon slices, or edible blossoms, for decoration

Icing sugar, for dusting (optional)

To make the tart pastry, in a bowl, mix together the flour, sugar and salt. Scatter the butter over the flour mixture and, using your fingertips, two knives, or a pastry blender, work in the butter until the mixture forms large, coarse crumbs. In a small bowl, whisk together the egg yolk and water until blended. Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture and stir and toss gently with a fork until the flour mixture is evenly moistened and forms clumps. Feel the dough; it should be just damp enough to form a rough ball. If necessary, mix in a few more drops of water to achieve the correct consistency. Turn out the dough onto a large piece of clingfilm and use it to cover the dough and shape into a smooth disc. Refrigerate the wrapped dough for at least 1 hour or up to overnight.

Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5.

MAKES 16 SMALL TARTS

Have ready sixteen 7.5-cm (3-inch) tartlet tins. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the dough about 6 mm (¼ inch) thick. Using a round pastry cutter about 7.5 cm (3 inches) in diameter, cut out as many rounds as possible. One at a time, transfer the dough rounds to the tartlet tins, gently pressing the dough onto the bottom and up the sides of each tin and trimming off any overhang. Gather up the trimmings, press together, reroll, cut out enough rounds to line the remaining tins. Place the lined tins on a baking tray and place in the freezer until chilled, about 30 minutes. Using a fork, prick the bottom and sides of the pastry lining each tin. Bake the tartlet shells until golden, 12–14 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and leave to cool.



ETIQUETTE NOTE

Small cakes and tarts are often featured on the tea table in *Downton Abbey*. These bite-size treats were considered finger food, which freed guests from using a knife and fork.

Carefully remove the cooled pastry cases from the tins. Fill the cases with the lemon curd, spreading it in an even layer. Decorate with the fruit or flowers, dust with icing sugar (if using), and serve.



BAKEWELL TART

This almond-and-jam-filled tart is all but a national treasure in England and is possibly the ultimate tea-time sweet. Though it's named for the town in Derbyshire where it's likely that it was first introduced, its exact origins are unknown. You can use different jams or fruits and coat it with a sugary glaze, though if you did, Mrs Patmore would likely call it by another name entirely.

1 quantity Tart Pastry (page 75)
115 g (½ cup) unsalted butter,
at room temperature, plus extra
for the tin
100 g (½ cup) caster sugar
½ teaspoon almond or
vanilla extract (optional)
Pinch of salt
2 eggs, at room temperature
140 g (1¼ cups) ground almonds
140 g (½ cup) raspberry or
strawberry jam
3 tablespoons flaked almonds
(optional)

SERVES 12

Make the tart pastry and refrigerate as directed.

Lightly butter the bottom and sides of a fluted 23-cm (9-inch) tart tin with a removable bottom. On a lightly floured work surface, roll out the pastry into a round 30 cm (12 inches) in diameter and about 6 mm (¼ inch) thick. Roll the dough around the rolling pin, centre it over the tart tin, and unroll the dough, centering it in the tin and allowing the excess to overhang the sides. Press the dough onto the bottom and up the sides of the tin, then trim the edges, allowing a 12-mm (½-inch) overhang. Roll the overhang back over onto itself and press firmly to reinforce the sides of the crust. Place the lined tin in the freezer while the oven heats, 15–20 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.

Line the chilled pastry case with parchment paper and fill with baking beans. Bake until the edges of the case are light brown, about 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and remove the beans and parchment. Return to the oven and continue baking until the pastry is pale golden, 7–9 minutes. Transfer the tin to a wire rack. Leave the oven set at 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4.

To make the filling, in a bowl, using an electric mixer, beat together the butter, sugar, almond extract (if using) and salt on a medium speed until fluffy and lighter in colour, 2–4 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. On a medium-low speed, add the ground almonds and beat just until blended.

Recipe continues on the following page



BUTTERFLY CAKES

A more refined cousin of the traditional American cupcake, these pretty petite fairy cakes are topped with a dollop of whipped cream, a spot of jam and a charming set of 'wings' fashioned from the domed cake tops – a perfect small and delicate bite for any tea time tray.

FOR THE CAKES

215 g (1½ cups) self-raising flour
1¼ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
115 g (½ cup) unsalted butter,
at room temperature
150 g (¾ cup) caster sugar
2 eggs, at room temperature
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
120 ml (½ cup) milk

FOR THE TOPPING

120 ml (½ cup) double cream
1 tablespoon icing sugar, plus
extra for dusting (optional)
1 tablespoon strawberry or
raspberry jam

MAKES 12 SMALL CAKES

To make the cakes, preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Line a 12-hole bun tin with paper cases.

In a small bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder and salt. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the butter on a medium speed until smooth, about 1 minute. Add the caster sugar, increase the speed to a medium-high and beat until fluffy and lighter in colour, 2–3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition and adding the vanilla with the final egg. On a low speed, add about half of the flour mixture and mix just until blended, then add the milk and again mix until blended. Add the remaining flour mixture and mix just until blended.

Divide the mixture evenly among the prepared cases and spread evenly. Bake until a skewer inserted into the centre of a cake or two comes out clean, 17–19 minutes. Leave to cool in the tin on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Lift the cakes from the tin and arrange, top side up, on the rack. Leave to cool completely.

To make the topping, in a bowl, using a handheld mixer, beat together the cream and icing sugar on a medium speed until stiff peaks form, 2–3 minutes. Use immediately or cover and refrigerate up to 2 hours before serving.

Just before serving, using a serrated knife, cut off the domed top from each cake and cut in half crossways to form the 'wings'. Spoon (or pipe with a plain tip) some of the whipped cream onto the centre of the fairy cake. Put a small dollop (about ¼ teaspoon) of the jam onto the centre of the whipped cream. Gently push 2 'wings', cut side down and at a slight angle, into the cream, positioning them on either side of the jam. Lightly dust the top of each cake with icing sugar, if desired.





ALMOND CAKE

Almonds have been imported into Britain since medieval times and have long been a common addition to cake recipes. Here, ground almonds and almond extract impart a bold flavour to this rich, moist, nutty tea-time favourite. In late spring, when cherries are in season, add them to the table to echo the kirsch in the hot syrup used to infuse the warm cake.

FOR THE CAKE

Unsalted butter, for the tin
100 g (1 cup) ground almonds
60 g (½ cup) plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
250 g (1¼ cups) caster sugar
6 eggs, separated, at room temperature
Grated zest of 1 lemon
1 teaspoon almond extract

FOR THE SYRUP

3 tablespoons kirsch
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons caster sugar

Icing sugar, for dusting

SERVES 8–10

Preheat the oven to 165°C/325°F/Gas Mark 3. Butter the bottom and sides of a 23-cm (9-inch) springform tin and line the bottom with parchment paper.

To make the cake, in a medium bowl, mix together the ground almonds, flour and baking powder. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat together the sugar, egg yolks and lemon zest on a medium speed until thick and pale, about 10 minutes. Add the ground almond mixture and almond extract and stir with a wooden spoon to blend well.

In a bowl, using clean beaters, beat the egg whites on a medium-high speed until soft peaks form. Using a spatula, fold the beaten whites into the egg yolk mixture just until no white streaks remain.

Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and gently smooth the top. Bake the cake until the top springs back when lightly touched, about 1 hour. Transfer to a wire rack and remove the tin sides.

To make the syrup, in a small saucepan over a medium heat, combine the kirsch, lemon juice and caster sugar and heat, stirring, until the sugar dissolves and the mixture is hot. Remove from the heat and brush the hot syrup gently and evenly over the hot cake. Leave the cake to cool completely.

Just before serving, lightly dust the top of the cake with icing sugar.



LEMON DRIZZLE CAKE

Warne's Model Cookery and Housekeeping Book, published in 1868 in both London and New York, contains one of the earliest recipes for lemon cake, which calls for just four ingredients: eggs, flour, sugar and grated lemon peel. A staple of tearooms in National Trust properties and regularly voted among the top ten favourite cakes in Britain, this deliciously sticky, moist version is slightly more elaborate yet just as traditional.

FOR THE CAKE

115 g (½ cup) unsalted butter,
at room temperature, plus extra
for the tin

185 g (1½ cups) self-raising flour,
plus extra for the tin

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

150 g (¾ cup) caster sugar

1 tablespoon grated lemon zest

3 eggs

120 ml (½ cup) milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

FOR THE SYRUP

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

3 tablespoons caster sugar

FOR THE GLAZE

60 g (½ cup) icing sugar

1 tablespoon lemon juice

SERVES 8

To make the cake, preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5. Butter a 2 lb loaf tin, then dust with flour, tapping out the excess.

Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt into a bowl. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat together the butter, caster sugar and lemon zest on a medium-high speed until fluffy and lighter in colour, about 3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the milk and vanilla and beat until blended. On a low speed, add the flour mixture and beat just until blended.

Transfer the mixture to the prepared tin and smooth the surface. Bake the cake until golden brown and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean, about 55 minutes. Leave the cake to cool in the tin on a wire rack for a few minutes, then turn it out onto the rack. Turn the cake on its side to cool while you make the syrup.

To make the syrup, in a small saucepan over a medium heat, combine the lemon juice and caster sugar. Bring to a simmer, stirring to dissolve the sugar, and then simmer until syrupy, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Using a long wooden skewer, pierce the sides and the bottom of the warm cake, making the holes about 2.5 cm (1 inch) apart and 2.5 cm (1 inch) deep. Brush the sides and bottom of the cake generously with the syrup, making sure it seeps into the holes.

To make the glaze, in a small bowl, mix together the icing sugar and lemon juice until smooth. When the cake is cool, turn it right side up on a serving plate and drizzle the glaze over the top. Leave to stand until the glaze is set, about 15 minutes, and serve.





RASPBERRY CUSTARD CAKE

Bursting with the flavour of fresh raspberries and vanilla custard, this simple one-layer cake boasts a moist and tender texture. It is perfect at tea time, of course, but it is also welcome as a dessert after lunch or dinner.

FOR THE CUSTARD

3 egg yolks
3 tablespoons caster sugar
Pinch of salt
180 ml (¾ cup) whole milk
60 ml (¼ cup) double cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract or vanilla paste

FOR THE CAKE

170 g (¾ cup) unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus extra for the tin
220 g (1¾ cups) self-raising flour, plus extra for the tin
1½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
200 g (1 cup) caster sugar
3 eggs, at room temperature
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
170 g (1½ cups) raspberries
2 tablespoons flaked almonds, toasted
Icing sugar, for dusting

SERVES 8–12

To make the custard, in a saucepan, whisk together the egg yolks, caster sugar and salt until blended and lighter in colour, about 1 minute. Pour in the milk and cream and whisk until blended, about 30 seconds. Place over a medium-low heat and cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon and hold a line drawn through it, 4–5 minutes. (It should register 77°C/170°F on an instant-read thermometer.) Remove from the heat, add the vanilla and whisk until blended. Scrape into a small bowl and leave to cool until room temperature, then cover and refrigerate until cold, 2–3 hours or up to 2 days. For faster cooling, set the bowl over a larger bowl filled with ice and water and stir until cold. You should have 310 g (1¼ cups).

To make the cake, preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4. Lightly butter the bottom and sides of a 25-cm (10-inch) square cake tin or a 25-cm (10-inch) round springform tin, then dust with flour, tapping out the excess.

Have the cold custard ready. In a small bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder and salt. In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the butter on a medium speed until smooth, about 1 minute. Increase the speed to medium-high, add the sugar and beat until fluffy and lighter in colour, 2–3 minutes. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition and adding the vanilla with the final egg. On a low speed, add half the flour mixture and mix just until blended, then add half of the custard and mix just until blended. Add the remaining flour mixture and again mix just until blended.

Transfer the mixture to the prepared tin, spread evenly, and smooth the top. Scatter the berries over the mixture, drizzle the remaining custard on top and finish with the flaked almonds. Bake the cake until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean, 43–45 minutes. Leave to cool in the tin on a wire rack for at least 20 minutes. Serve warm.





TEA SANDWICHES

With lunch at noon and dinner at eight, the afternoon tea proved the perfect answer to snacking politely before mealtime, and small, delicate finger sandwiches played a big role in quelling late-afternoon hunger. Custom dictated the sandwiches be made with two thin, crustless slices of bread. The filling was most commonly butter, mayonnaise or cream cheese and paper-thin vegetable slices, or flavourful combinations like cheese and pickle or ham and mustard, though the offerings went beyond these classics.

CUCUMBER

¾ cucumber

Salt

8 thin slices good-quality white bread

Unsalted butter, at room temperature

White pepper

SERVES 4–6

Slice the cucumber as thinly as possible. Put the slices into a colander in the sink or into a sieve over a bowl, sprinkle lightly with salt, and leave to stand for 20 minutes. Taste a slice to make sure you haven't added too much salt. If you discover you have, rinse the slices briefly under cool running water. Lay a few sheets of kitchen towel on a work surface, arrange the cucumber slices in a single layer on the paper and pat the slices dry.

Lay the bread slices on a chopping board and spread each slice generously with butter. Arrange the cucumber slices, overlapping them, on 4 of the bread slices and sprinkle with pepper. Top with the remaining bread slices, buttered side down.

Using a serrated knife, cut off the crusts from each sandwich, then cut the sandwiches into neat fingers, triangles or quarters.

Recipe continues on the following page



TEA ETIQUETTE

Today, triangle-shaped sandwiches are fashionable, but in the Edwardian era, sandwiches were commonly rectangular. The crusts should always be trimmed off, then the sandwiches cut into the desired shape and neatly stacked.