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mary berry xmas cake recipe

Published: September 3, 2026 | Index ID: #-

Mary Berry Xmas Cake Recipe: A Classic British Holiday Delight

When the holiday season arrives, the scent of spiced fruitcake drifting through the kitchen is a comforting reminder of family traditions and festive celebrations. Among the many beloved Christmas desserts, the **Mary Berry Xmas cake**stands out as a timeless classic that has won the hearts of bakers worldwide. This recipe, inspired by the legendary British baker Mary Berry, blends rich dried fruit, aromatic spices, and a touch of sweetness to create a moist, flavorful cake that can be enjoyed from the first slice to the last.

Whether you are a seasoned baker or a newcomer to holiday baking, this guide will walk you through every step—from selecting the finest ingredients to mastering the art of fruitcake preparation. By the end, you'll have a delicious, show stopper dessert that's perfect for Christmas tables, gift baskets, or simply indulging in a cozy winter treat.

Why Mary Berry's Christmas Cake Is a Must Try

Mary Berry, renowned for her culinary expertise and approachable recipes, has been a staple on British television for decades. Her Christmas cakes are celebrated for their balanced flavor profile, generous fruit content, and elegant presentation. The **Mary Berry Xmas cake recipe**is a testament to her passion for traditional baking while offering modern twists that cater to today's tastes.

Key reasons to embrace this recipe:

- Authentic flavor: A harmonious blend of dried fruits, spices, and a hint of citrus.
- Versatility: Easily adapted for dietary preferences or ingredient availability.
- Time tested: Proven to deliver moist texture and deep flavor with simple techniques.
- Presentation: A cake that looks as good as it tastes—ideal for holiday décor.

Ingredients: The Building Blocks of a Classic Christmas Cake

Below is the full ingredient list for the **Mary Berry Xmas cake recipe**. All measurements are in metric units, but conversions to imperial are provided for convenience.

1. Dry Fruits & Candied Fruit

   200 /g mixed dried fruit (apples, raisins, sultanas)
2. 100 /g candied orange peel, chopped
3. 100 /g candied lemon peel, chopped
4. 50 /g chopped dried figs
5. 50 /g chopped dried apricots

- 1 /tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ /tsp ground nutmeg
- ¼ /tsp ground cloves
- 1 /tsp ground ginger
- 1 /tsp vanilla extract

- 250 /g all purpose flour
- 125 /g plain breadcrumbs
- 100 /g brown sugar
- 1 /tsp baking soda
- ½ /tsp salt

- 200 /g unsalted butter, softened
- 200 /g dark brown sugar
- 4 /eggs, room temperature
- 120 /ml milk
- 120 /ml brandy, rum, or fortified wine (optional for soaking)

- 50 /g chopped nuts (walnuts or almonds)
- 50 /g shredded coconut
- 50 /g dark chocolate chips

Preparation Steps: From Mixing to Baking

1. Pre Baking Preparations

Preheat your oven to 150 /°C (300 /°F). Line a 20 /cm (8 /in) round cake tin with parchment paper and lightly grease the sides. This step ensures a smooth release once the cake has cooled.

2. Soak the Fruits

Place all dried and candied fruits in a bowl and cover them with the optional alcohol (brandy, rum, or fortified wine). Let the mixture sit for at least 2 hours, or overnight if you have time. Soaking rehydrates the fruits, intensifies flavors, and keeps the cake moist for longer.

3. Cream the Butter and Sugar

In a large mixing bowl, beat the softened butter and dark brown sugar together until light and fluffy. This process incorporates air, giving the cake a lighter texture. Add the vanilla extract and continue mixing.

4. Add Eggs One at a Time

Incorporate the eggs, one at a time, ensuring each is fully mixed before adding the next. This gradual addition keeps the batter stable and prevents curdling.

5. Combine Dry Ingredients

Whisk the flour, breadcrumbs, baking soda, and salt in a separate bowl. Sift the brown sugar into the dry mix to avoid clumps.

6. Alternate Dry and Wet Mixtures

Gradually fold the dry mixture into the butter egg mixture, alternating with milk. Begin and end with the dry mix. This method maintains a smooth batter and evenly distributes the spices.

7. Fold in Fruits and Optional Add Ins

Drain the soaked fruits, reserving the liquid for later use. Gently fold the fruits, nuts, coconut, and chocolate chips into the batter. Be careful not to overmix; you want the fruits evenly distributed without breaking them down.

8. Bake the Cake

Transfer the batter to the prepared tin, smoothing the top with a spatula. Bake for 45–50 minutes, checking for

doneness by inserting a skewer into the center; it should come out clean. If the cake browns too quickly, tent it with foil.

9. Cool and Store

Allow the cake to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then turn it onto a wire rack to cool completely. Once cooled, wrap the cake tightly in plastic wrap, then in foil, and store in an airtight container. For best flavor, let the cake rest for at least 48 hours before serving, allowing the fruit to fully integrate into the batter.

Serving Ideas and Presentation Tips

A beautifully presented Christmas cake can become the centerpiece of your holiday spread. Here are some ideas to elevate your **Mary Berry Xmas cake recipe** presentation:

- Classic Glaze: Brush the cake with a simple glaze made from powdered sugar and a splash of brandy. This adds shine and a sweet finish.
- Fruit Garnish: Arrange fresh or candied fruit slices around the cake for a vibrant color contrast.
- Nut Topping: Sprinkle toasted almond slivers or chopped walnuts for added crunch.
- Chocolate Drizzle: Melt dark chocolate and drizzle it over the top for a modern twist.
- Holiday Décor: Use edible gold leaf, sprinkles, or a dusting of powdered sugar to create a festive look.

Variations to Suit Your Taste and Dietary Needs

Gluten Free Version

Replace the all purpose flour with a gluten free blend that includes rice flour, tapioca starch, and xanthan gum. Use gluten free breadcrumbs or crushed gluten free crackers to maintain texture.

Vegan Adaptation

Use plant based butter or coconut oil in place of dairy butter. Substitute the eggs with flaxseed meal (1 tsp flaxseed + 3 /tsp water per egg) or a commercial egg replacer. Ensure the chocolate chips are dairy free.

Low Sugar Option

Reduce the dark brown sugar by 25 % and add a natural sweetener such as maple syrup or agave nectar. Pair with unsweetened dried fruits to keep the overall sweetness balanced.

Alcohol Free Soak

If you prefer to avoid alcohol, use warm water or fruit juice (orange or apple) to soak the fruits. The flavor profile will be slightly different but still delicious.

Baking Tips: Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

- Overmixing: Can result in a dense cake. Mix just until ingredients are combined.
- Too Much Liquid: The soaked fruit liquid can make the batter watery. Use the minimum amount needed to rehydrate the fruits.
- Uneven Baking: Rotate the tin halfway through baking to ensure even heat distribution.
- Dry Cake: If the cake appears dry, consider adding a splash of milk or brandy during the final mixing stage.
- Stale Flavor: Store the cake in a cool, dry place. Avoid refrigeration, as it can dry out the cake.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I make this cake ahead of time?

Absolutely. In fact, allowing the cake to rest for 48–72 hours after baking enhances its flavor. Store it wrapped in plastic and foil, then reheat briefly before serving.

Is the alcohol necessary?

While alcohol adds depth of flavor and helps preserve the cake, it's optional. You can use fruit juice or water as a substitute.

What type of brandy or rum works best?

A good quality, aged brandy or dark rum balances sweetness with a subtle spice note. Avoid overly sweet liqueurs that might overpower the cake.

How can I keep the cake moist during storage?

Wrap the cake tightly in plastic wrap, then foil. Place it in an airtight container. If you notice it drying out, drizzle a little brandy or water over it before rewrapping.

Can I bake this cake in a different size tin?

Yes, but adjust the baking time. A larger tin will require a longer bake time, while a smaller tin will bake faster. Monitor doneness with a skewer.

Conclusion: A Festive Classic Worth Sharing

The **Mary Berry Xmas cake recipe**is more than just a dessert; it's a celebration of tradition, flavor, and the joy of sharing. With its rich blend of dried fruits, aromatic spices, and a moist crumb, this cake promises to become a holiday staple for years to come.

Whether you're gifting a slice to a loved one, serving it at a family gathering, or simply enjoying it by the fire, this recipe offers a reliable, comforting experience that captures the essence of Christmas. Follow the steps, experiment with variations, and let the aroma of spiced fruitcake fill your home. Happy baking and merry Christmas!

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