

ENTERTAINING

King of cakes

Master pâtissier Eric Lanlard shows how to make an array of special-occasion treats. The centrepiece to any party table, these recipes really do taste as good as they look

The ultimate dessert for the Jubilee celebrations, this cake – created especially for HELLO! – will sit equally well as the star attraction at a sophisticated dinner, or on a trestle table at a neighbourhood street party. But this doesn't just look good; it's also a divine cake to eat. The crunchy caramel-coated profiteroles are filled with smooth crème pâtissière and rest on a light, iced fruit cake – something for everyone



DIAMOND JUBILEE CAKE

Serves 14

Cake and profiteroles

Preparation time **90 minutes**

Cooking time **2¾ hours, plus cooling time**

Building the croquembouche **60 minutes, plus drying time**

INGREDIENTS

- 150g/5oz unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
- 150g/5oz golden caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp orange blossom water
- Finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange and 1 lemon
- 175g/6oz plain flour
- 100g/4oz glacé cherries
- 100g/4oz mixed peel, chopped
- 100g/4oz raisins
- 100g/4oz golden sultanas
- 3 tbsp apricot glaze, softened
- 450g/1lb marzipan
- 450g/1lb ready-to-roll icing
- 20cm/8in cake board

For the royal icing

- 2 egg whites
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 500g/1lb 2oz golden icing sugar, sifted
- 2 tsp orange blossom water

For the profiteroles

- 100g/4oz plain flour
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tsp golden caster sugar
- 75g/3oz unsalted butter
- 200ml/7fl oz water
- 3 medium eggs, mixed together

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C, 325°F, Gas 3. Grease a deep 15cm/6in cake tin with butter and double-line the base and sides with baking paper.

2. Cream the butter and sugar together in a large mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs gradually. In a separate bowl, mix the orange blossom water with the zests and juice of the orange and lemon. Sift the flour over the creamed butter and sugar and add all the dried fruit. Fold together using a large metal spoon then stir in the juice and zest mix.

3. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes. Turn the oven down to 160°C, 300°F, Gas 2 and bake for another 1¾ hours, until the cake has risen, is golden brown and an inserted skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool for 15 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

4. To decorate, place the cake on the board and brush the top and sides with the apricot glaze. Roll out the marzipan then cut a circle for the top and a long strip to wrap around the sides. Gently press these onto the cake. Next, roll out the icing, cut out as above, and use it to cover the marzipan. Leave to dry.

5. For the royal icing, tip the egg whites into a bowl and stir in the lemon juice. Gradually add the sifted icing sugar, mixing well after each addition. The finished icing should be stiff.

6. Transfer the cake – still on its board – to a cake stand. Fill a piping bag with royal icing and pipe a pattern around the circumference.

7. For the croquembouche (the tower of profiteroles), preheat the oven to 200°C, 400°F, Gas 6 and line 3 baking sheets with baking paper. Sift the flour twice with the salt and sugar.

8. Place the butter in a medium-sized pan with



the water and heat gently until the butter has melted. Bring to the boil, immediately tip in the flour then beat vigorously with a wooden spoon over a low heat until the dough leaves the sides of the pan and looks smooth. Cook, stirring, over a low heat for a minute.

9. Leave the mixture to cool for 3-4 minutes then gradually mix in the eggs, whisking well after each addition. (You may not need to add all the egg – the finished paste should be glossy, hold its shape and be stiff enough to pipe.)

10. Use a piping bag and a small, plain tube to dot the choux pastry onto the prepared baking sheets, leaving 2.5cm/1in between buns. (You'll need 35 choux buns, but make a few extra, for spares.) Bake for 20-25 minutes. Remove the buns from the oven. Make a small hole on either side of each to allow steam to escape then return them to the oven for a couple of minutes to crisp.

For the crème pâtissière filling

- 300ml/½pt full-fat milk
- 2 large eggs, separated
- 2 tbsp cornflour
- 2 tbsp golden caster sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

1. In a small pan, gently heat the milk, but do not allow it to come to the boil. Put the egg yolks, cornflour and sugar in a bowl and beat well.

2. Add the warm milk to the egg and cornflour mixture, stirring to combine. Return the custard mixture to the pan and stir with a wooden spoon

over a low heat until it thickens. Don't let it boil. Pour the custard into a bowl and stir in the vanilla extract. Put a piece of baking paper on the surface to prevent a skin forming then leave to cool.

For the caramel

- 175g/6oz golden caster sugar
- 175ml/6fl oz water

1. (Make 2 batches of caramel so it doesn't burn. Use 1 to stick the buns together, the other for creating the spun sugar. If the caramel becomes too thick when you are using it, return the pan to a very gentle heat and stir it occasionally.) Heat the sugar and water together in a pan over a gentle heat. Don't stir, or the sugar granules will crystallise on the side of the saucepan. When the sugar has dissolved, boil until the mixture turns rich brown. As soon as the caramel is ready, dip the saucepan into a bowl of cold water and leave it for 30 seconds, to prevent it from cooking further.

Building the final cake

You'll need:

- Piping bag and No.4 icing nozzle
- Baking sheet or greaseproof paper
- 7.5cm/3in pastry ring or polystyrene disc to build the tower around (or you can buy – or make – a special croquembouche cone)
- A plate or cake stand

1. Use a small knife to make a hole in the top of each profiterole.

2. Pipe the crème into the buns.

3. Make the first batch of caramel. Dip the bottom of each profiterole in the caramel then place on a lightly oiled baking sheet or greaseproof paper.

4. Place the cone or pastry ring on a work surface and surround the base

with buns, with the caramel pointing outwards. Add a second row in the same way, holding the buns in place until they stick. Carefully remove the polystyrene disc or ring.

5. Stick a further row of buns in place, positioning them on the inside edge of the row below, so that they tilt slightly inwards. If you cannot fit a whole bun in to finish a row, use a sharp knife to trim a little of the adjacent buns to make room. Continue adding rows of buns in the same way, topping the arrangement with a single bun.

6. Make a second batch of caramel for the spun sugar. To spin the sugar, hold 2 forks back to back and dip them into the caramel. Spin the caramel in circles around and over the buns, separating the forks to make the longer trails. Caramel strands that trail over the edge of the plate can be broken off with your fingers or a knife. When dry, place the finished profiterole cone on top of the cake base.

• For a finishing touch, you can decorate the base of the cake with crowns and fresh berries, and colour the royal icing in edible gold paint.

Summer of celebration

To commemorate a summer of festivities, Eric has created a Jubilant Afternoon Tea for London's Jumeirah Carlton Tower Hotel, priced £40, or £45 with a glass of champagne. To book, call 020-7858 7181; visit jumeirahcarlontower.com.