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MARY BERRY'S ULTIMATE CAKE BOOK

OVER 200 CLASSIC RECIPES



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About the Book

Since it was first published, almost ten years ago, *Mary Berry's Ultimate Cake Book* has become a much-loved home-baking bible. An essential handbook for many home cooks, this revised edition is set to inspire a whole new generation of would-be cake makers to go out and get baking.

Over the years, Mary has earned a reputation as the queen of cakes and in the *Ultimate Cake Book* she shares the secrets of her success with over 200 recipes from simple classics to the sinfully indulgent. Irresistible ideas include *Raspberry Meringue Roulade*, *Gooseberry and Elderflower Cheesecake*, *Sultana and Orange Traybake*, *Classic Rich Christmas Cake*, *Iced Apricot Fruit Loaf*, *Blueberry Muffins* and *Walnut Shortbreads*. There is even an entire chapter devoted to chocolate . . . a must for chocaholics everywhere.

Ideal for both novice and experienced cake makers alike, *Mary Berry's Ultimate Cake Book* includes practical advice on cake-making equipment, ingredients and methods, and simple step-by-step instructions for each recipe. Mary also includes a series of cake-making tips to help solve the most common baking problems and even suggests how to stock up your store-cupboard with the best quality ingredients.

Packed to the brim with sensational recipes for every occasion, Mary's easy-to-follow methods and foolproof techniques make it possible for everyone to bake and enjoy their favourite cakes.

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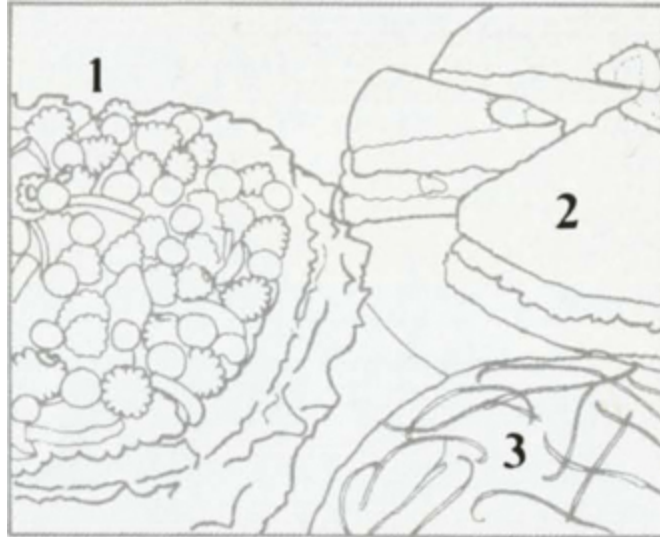
Yorkshire Cheesecake Tartlets

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*Mary Berry's Ultimate
Cake Book*

Over 200 Classic Recipes

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Summer Selection

1 Pavlova ([here](#))

2 Wimbledon Cake ([here](#))

3 Double Orange Cake ([here](#))





Winter Selection

1 *Melting Moments* ([here](#))

2 *Coburg Buns* ([here](#))

3 *English Cherry Cake* ([here](#))

4 *Traditional Rock Cakes* ([here](#))

5 *Marbled Chocolate Ring Cake* ([here](#))

6 *Fast Flapjacks* ([here](#))



Introduction

When I first collected together the recipes for my *Ultimate Cake Book*, my aim was to inspire a whole new generation of cooks to discover the delights of home baking. Little did I realise, however, just how enthusiastically the book would be received or that now, almost 10 years on, I would be releasing a revised edition. I am, of course, delighted that so many people have enjoyed using the book and I do hope that many more of you will continue to find it useful.

Cake making is often thought of as a difficult and complex method of cooking. This is because you need to follow the measurements and instructions very precisely. But if you are accurate, stick to the recipe, and you keep some general 'rules' in mind, you should enjoy success every time. To help you get to grips with these rules, I've included a general introductory section in this book which includes comprehensive information on cake-making ingredients, equipment and the different techniques that are used in my recipes. Once you've read this section you'll be truly equipped to get baking. There is a diverse selection of cake recipes - some traditional, some old favourites with a twist, and lots of my own unique recipes - all have been thoroughly tested and appreciated. If there is a potential trouble spot or tricky technique involved, I have suggested tips and ideas to help you cope. Where possible, I have simplified the methods, and the finishes and decorations which can often be awkward, are easy to do, but remain stylish.

The popularity of cake making is constantly growing. More and more cake and cake icing and decorating books are filling our bookshelves, and magazines are available, overflowing with delicious recipes and mouth-watering photographs to tempt us. I don't find this new-found

enthusiasm particularly surprising, for home baking has never been easier than it is now: methods and techniques have been simplified; good quality, reliable ingredients are readily available; and most modern kitchens are now equipped with gadgets such as electric food mixers and processors to speed things up. In the old days, cake making used to be a rather more difficult and time-consuming task, involving creaming butter and sugar by hand (taking up to 30 minutes!), meticulously preparing tins, and persuading untrustworthy ovens to produce and maintain the correct temperature. Nowadays, due to the introduction of fan ovens, modern non-stick tins and trays and fancy decorating utensils, virtually none of this is necessary - a cake can be prepared and baked in no time at all, ready for devouring at a special celebration, a picnic or a simple family tea.

The recipes in this book cover every occasion possible where a cake, bake or biscuit might be required. There are sumptuous chocolate cakes for an irresistible treat, lighter alternatives such as cheesecakes and crisp meringues, cakes for special celebrations such as Christmas, weddings and birthdays, Continental specialities, as well as family cakes and homely scones, small cakes for children's parties or packed lunches, traybakes for selling at your local fête, and melt-in-the-mouth biscuits and cakes which would make ideal gifts.

Whether you're a beginner or an experienced cake-maker, there will be many cakes here that you will enjoy baking time and time again, and which your family and friends will definitely enjoy eating! This is a book to *use*, so have fun baking!



Mary Berry

Cake-making Ingredients

The best quality ingredients are needed to make cakes that taste as fresh and as good as possible.

FATS

Butter and margarine are the usual fats used in cake making, but lard, blended white vegetable fat and oil can also be used.

BUTTER

It is not always necessary to use butter to obtain the best results, but it must be used where a buttery flavour is all important, for instance in shortbread. I tend to use a salted or lightly salted butter - the unsalted kind is far too expensive! The temperature of butter is crucial to the success of a cake mix. Butter needs to be left at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before using in a creaming method. Even then it is often best to cream the butter alone to soften it further before adding the sugar.

If rubbing in for pastry, say, cut the cold butter into pieces, or grate it into the flour. Use softened butter for the all-in-one method.

Butter can be stored in the freezer.

SOFT BAKING MARGARINE

These have improved greatly and now have a good flavour, and cakes made with them have excellent keeping qualities. They are specifically useful for the all-in-one method of cake making.

For all cake making, use either a baking margarine at room temperature, or a spread with a high percentage of fat i.e. 70-72 per cent, straight from the fridge. If making cakes by hand, the fat should be slightly softer than if using a mixer.

Whatever brand you choose, always check the side of the packet for any instructions. It is very easy to pick up a low-fat spread by mistake, and these are not suitable for baking due to their high water content.

HARD OR BLOCK MARGARINE

Block margarines vary in their degree of hardness according to the brand; look for one which has been manufactured specifically for baking purposes. Block margarines are best used in the melting or rubbed-in methods; see *Butter* notes for ways of using. They can also be used when the flavour of the fat doesn't matter too much, when the cake has a strong flavour of its own, such as in a chocolate cake or parkin.

OILS

Cakes made using oil are very easy, and tend to be very moist. Choose a light oil with almost no flavour such as ground-nut or sunflower oil.

Cakes with oil need a little extra raising agent to prevent heaviness, and this can be in the form of baking powder or whisked egg whites.

FLOURS

Many types of flour are available and the difference between them is largely due to the gluten content and also any added raising agents. Gluten is a protein which becomes elastic and sticky when the flour is moistened. It sets when heated, trapping air in the mixture and giving a light texture.

Whatever kind of flour you buy, do pay attention to the use-by date: after that the flour will not be so good.

PLAIN AND SELF-RAISING FLOUR

For cake making, a flour with a low gluten content is used as it is more starchy, absorbing fat well, to give a light, soft

texture. Ordinary plain and self-raising flours are of this type, and are therefore used for cakes. There are other 'cake flours', but the formulae used in these tend to vary, so you may find them less reliable.

Always sift flour when making cakes. This is not to remove lumps as most flour is not lumpy, but it lightens the flour by incorporating air.

WHOLEMEAL FLOUR

Wholemeal or brown flours can also be used in cake making. They give a coarser texture but add a delicious nutty flavour. Brown self-raising flour is now widely available and is the best one to use for wholefood cakes.

STRONG FLOUR

Strong flour has the highest gluten content and is used for bread making and for some pastry. It is not used for cakes.

OTHER FLOURS

For various types of cakes, I use different types of flour, among them semolina, cornflour and rice flour: these are good in a shortbread for instance, adding to the crunchy texture. Buckwheat flour has a rather strong flavour, but is delicious in a courgette loaf ([see here](#)); potato flour can be useful, too.

RAISING AGENTS

There are many agents which help make cakes rise, but the chief among them are baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and easy-blend dried yeast.

BAKING POWDER

This is the raising agent most commonly added in cake making. It consists of an acid (usually cream of tartar) and an alkali (bicarbonate of soda) mixed with a dried starch or flour. When moistened the chemicals react to produce

carbon dioxide which expands during baking, making the cake rise.

The baking powders which are on the market today contain a slower-acting raising agent which is more tolerant if mixtures are made up and left before baking. If it is more convenient, make up the cake mixture, then bake it later.

Don't be tempted to add more baking powder than the recipe specifies or the mixture will rise well at first but will then collapse, resulting in a heavy, close-textured cake.

BICARBONATE OF SODA (BAKING SODA)

This can be used alone as a raising agent in cakes with a strong flavour, such as gingerbread, where the bitter flavour of the soda is masked, and where it can react with the natural acids present in ingredients such as black treacle, lemon juice or buttermilk.

CREAM OF TARTAR

This is not used alone as a raising agent, but is sometimes used with bicarbonate of soda in recipes to replace baking powder.

EASY-BLEND DRIED YEAST

This is the easiest of all the yeasts to use: simply mix it with the flour and then add the liquid. It keeps well, but do not allow it to go beyond the use-by date.

However, if you do use ordinary dried yeast, follow the manufacturer's instructions when adding liquid. I'm afraid you will find this a more lengthy process.

EGGS

Large eggs are used in the recipes unless otherwise specified. If your kitchen is warm, keep the eggs in the fridge, but allow them to come to room temperature before using.

If you keep ducks, you can use their eggs in recipes, depending on size.

While the proven risks of healthy people becoming ill from eating fresh raw eggs is minimal, the elderly, pregnant women, the sick and the very young should not do so just in case.

SUGARS AND OTHER SWEETENERS

I like to use the more natural sugars in my cake making, such as golden caster and golden granulated – there is so much more flavour – but there is now a huge variety of sugars and sweeteners available which can add different textures and some interesting flavours.

CASTER SUGAR

This is the sugar used most commonly in cake making but especially for whisked sponge cakes, creamed mixtures and meringues. The small, regular grain ensures that it blends smoothly in mixing to give an even texture.

GRANULATED SUGAR

This has a coarser texture than caster, and is best used for rubbed-in cake mixtures or in melting methods. If used in a creamed mixture it will give a slight grittiness and a speckled appearance to the cake. Neither would the cake have such a good volume.

ICING SUGAR

Although usually associated only with cake icings, icing sugar is a vital ingredient for *meringue cuite* where the fine sugar crystals are easily dissolved when whisked with the egg whites. It is not generally used for basic cake mixtures as it produces a poor volume and a hard crust.

It is essential to use icing sugar in cake icings, although we now have the option of buying ready-made royal icing.

MUSCOVADO SUGARS

Muscovado sugars are traditionally made from raw cane sugar, and the colour and flavour vary according to molasses content.

Light muscovado is excellent to use in many cakes as it creams well and has a lovely caramely flavour. Brown sugar meringues, using half soft brown sugar and half caster sugar, are particularly delicious.

Dark muscovado sugar easily overpowers other flavours and therefore needs to be used with care. It gives an excellent flavour and colour to gingerbreads and rich fruit cakes.

To prevent muscovado sugars from going hard, put a damp piece of kitchen paper or J-cloth in the bag or jar.

DEMERARA SUGAR

This is traditionally unrefined, but it has a fairly low molasses content, thus is light in colour. It is most suitable for use in cakes made by the melting method where heat and moisture dissolve the large crystals. It can also be used in rubbed-in mixtures but not successfully in creamed mixtures as the large crystals do not break down sufficiently during the mixing. It is also useful for sprinkling on top of cakes and to add crunch to cheesecake bases.

NIBBED SUGAR

The nibs were the rough-shaped 'shavings' that fell from the early form of cut cubes. It is useful as a topping for cakes before baking, but you can use crushed sugar cubes or lumps instead.

GOLDEN SYRUP AND BLACK TREACLE

These are made from selected refinery liquor after the refined sugar has been crystallized. Golden syrup is light and sweet; treacle, which has added cane molasses, is very much darker and stronger.

CONDENSED MILK

This is used as a sweetener in some recipes. It is canned milk from which half the water content has been removed, and to which sugar has been added. (It makes wonderful toffee and fudge.)

MALT EXTRACT

Made from powdered malt reduced to a syrup, malt extract helps the action of carbon dioxide in bread making, and adds a sweet flavour.

HONEY

The world's oldest sweetener, use a clear or runny honey in cake making, as this dissolves more quickly.

VANILLA SUGAR

This adds a wonderful flavour to many cakes. Simply store two or three vanilla pods in a jar of caster sugar. After about a couple of weeks, the sugar is imbued with the pungency of the vanilla; as you use the sugar, simply top up the jar with more.

DAIRY PRODUCE

This includes milks, creams, yoghurts and cheeses.

MILKS

The liquid in many of my recipes is milk, and I just use my ordinary doorstep variety. If you are watching your weight, a lower-fat milk such as semi-skimmed will work just as well.

Buttermilk can be found in good supermarkets. It is pasteurized skimmed milk which has been treated with a culture to produce an acidity ideal for certain breads and scones.

CREAMS

I never use synthetic creams. I normally use whipping cream for filling cakes – it is healthier and cheaper than double – but double is best if you want to pipe the cream into cake decorations. Whipping cream *will* hold its shape, but not for as long as double. If adding brandy or other flavouring to a cream for whipping, use double. Cream is best whipped from cold.

Single and soured creams also have their uses in cake making. *Crème fraîche* is, literally, fresh cream, but it is cream treated with a culture to give it a light acidity. It is lighter than double cream and is available in half-fat and full-fat.

YOGHURT

You can use low- or full-fat natural or plain yoghurt, whichever you please. The full-fat, or Greek-style, yoghurt has the best flavour.

For reasons of both health and economy, I often use half whipped cream and half low-fat natural yoghurt as the filling for a cake. Remember, though, that yoghurt is wetter than cream so if you want a firmer filling use full-fat natural yoghurt.

SOFT CHEESES

For cheesecakes, use low-fat or full-fat soft cheese, whichever you like. Curd cheese, with its slightly tart flavour, is useful, too. For healthier, but less tasty, cheesecakes, cottage cheese can sometimes be used if it is made smooth by processing or sieving.

The texture of *fromage frais*, made from skimmed cows' milk and sometimes enriched with cream, can vary from firm, to floppy and pourable. You can use it to great effect in cheesecakes as a substitute for low-fat soft cheese.

HARD CHEESES

Perhaps surprisingly in a cake book, some hard cheeses are used, in savoury scones, cheese straws etc. Mature Cheddar and Parmesan are particularly flavourful.

CHOCOLATE

The different types of chocolate and their uses are discussed in detail in the introduction to Chapter 1, Glorious Chocolate Cakes ([see here](#)).

SPICES

Ready-blended spices such as mixed spice are useful to have for general flavouring, but some recipes call for individual spices such as ground cinnamon, ginger and cloves. All spices should be as fresh as possible, and have an even better flavour when freshly ground. Buy in small quantities and replace often. Store them in the dark. Keep whole nutmeg in particular to grate freshly when needed.

Stem ginger is particularly useful in a few recipes. If you like the flavour use the ginger itself and the syrup lavishly!

DRIED FRUIT

Today, much of the dried fruit that we buy has been dried by artificial heat rather than the sun. Mineral oils are sometimes sprayed on to the fruits after drying to give them a glossy appearance and to prevent them sticking together. Try to buy dried fruit which has been treated with vegetable oils instead. Most dried fruit now comes ready washed, but it is wise to quickly pick over the fruit to remove any small pieces of stalk.

Dried fruit can dry out once the packet is opened, so store in an airtight container, or freeze in polythene bags to keep the maximum flavour. Mixed peel keeps better this way, and dried apricots don't darken in colour.

Whole candied peel has much more flavour than the ready mixed chopped peel and can be bought in good delicatessens and health-food stores. If the peel is hard and

sugary, run it under the hot tap for a few seconds to soften it, then dry and chop. I use scissors to chop the peel roughly, and then a sharp knife if finer chopped peel is needed.

If you do a lot of baking, buy dried fruits separately - currants, raisins, peel etc. - and mix up your own mixed dried fruit. This can be cheaper, and means you have the individual proportions you particularly like.

Glacé cherries should be halved or quartered then washed and thoroughly dried before putting in a cake mixture, as this prevents them sinking to the bottom.

NUTS

A wide variety of nuts are used in cake baking and decorating, either whole, chopped, shredded, flaked or ground, to add flavour and texture. However, nuts are expensive and have a short shelf life, quickly going rancid in a warm kitchen. Use the freezer as an extra store-cupboard, or keep small quantities in airtight containers, preferably in the fridge. Whole shelled nuts keep for up to five years in the freezer, flaked and ground almonds for one year. Shake out only what is required and pop the remainder back.

Nuts bought in their shells should feel heavy; if they are light, then they are probably stale.

Walnut pieces can now be bought, and they are cheaper than whole shelled nuts if they are to be chopped.

TOASTING NUTS

The best way to toast nuts, such as flaked almonds, is under the grill, but they do need to be watched very carefully. You need to turn them frequently with a long-handled palette knife to obtain a good even colour and also to prevent them from burning.

Coconut is also best toasted in this way but be warned, it browns and then burns very quickly.