

# Scrummy Victoria Sponge



This month is another mouthwatering recipe from **JANE MACBEAN**, cake baker extraordinaire and a stalwart of the Hardy's Flower Show Team. She writes:

## 'Victoria Sponge

*The sponge cake has been around in many guises since the early 1600's, originating in Italy. One of the earliest known recipes was published in a book by English poet Gervase Markham in 1615. entitled "The English Huswife" containing the inward and outward virtues which ought to be in a complete woman. ( Editor 'Ahh Bless!!')*

*Many of these recipes had a biscuit type finish and in the mid eighteenth century raising agents began to be added creating a different texture. The discovery of baking powder by Englishman Alfred Bird in 1843 allowed the successful mixture of the ingredients we use today.*

*In the UK it became known as the Victoria Sponge as Queen Victoria enjoyed a slice with her afternoon tea. The sponge the Queen would have enjoyed would have a plain jam filling, no buttercream and a top dusting of icing sugar.*

*The Victoria sponge remains a popular cake today and I always make one when I open the garden for the NGS and there is never any left.'*

## Ingredients

For a 20 cm loose lined bottom sponge cake tin - depth 40mm. Ensure all ingredients are at room temperature before starting, this usually takes a couple of hours

Eggs - begin by weighing the eggs, they need to weigh about 330-350 grams, then set aside

Butter or margarine - use same weight as the eggs

Caster sugar - use same weight as the eggs

Extra fine sponge flour\* - use same weight as the eggs

Baking powder 2.5 grams

Vanilla extract (not vanilla essence)

\*this is sold by most supermarkets and specially milled to produce the best sponge cakes.

**Note: the butter/margarine, caster sugar and extra fine sponge flour all need to weigh the same as the eggs.**

### Method

Beat together the butter and sugar really well until light and fluffy.

Add the eggs slowly with a few drops of vanilla extract and beat in well, do not allow to curdle.

When well beaten fold in the sifted sponge flour with the baking powder and mix well.

Finish mixing with a quick blast of a hand mixer.

Divide the mixture into two sponge tins lined with baking parchment. Bake at 180 degrees Celsius/ 160 degrees Celsius Fan Oven for about twenty five minutes or until well risen and a skewer comes out clean. Do not open the oven door at all during cooking as this will cause the sponge to sink.

Allow the sponges to cool before removing from their baking tins and place on a wire rack.

When completely cooled, put together. Spread the bottom layer with jam of choice.

Spread the underneath of the top layer with buttercream and turn onto the jammed one.

Dust the top with icing sugar.

Enjoy with a nice cup of tea and a good book.