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THE ORIGINAL MAKER

A Special Christmas Pudding Recipe by Juliet Sear

This delicious, dark and boozy pudding is loosely based on my nan's recipe. However, I've added in some extra booze and glacé ginger for a little more punch, which is taken from my world-best Christmas cake recipe, so it's a wonderful hybrid of the two!

There are so many ways to mix up a Christmas pudding. I like to use butter as opposed to suet and I like to cream the butter and sugar in my pudding recipe – it adds a little lightness, it is less dense and heavy, and we all love the texture in our house.

You don't have to soak the fruit overnight – just a couple of hours will do – but you can soak it overnight if you want to. The pudding can be made fresh but it will improve and mature if you make it on Stir-up Sunday and keep it stored in the lead-up to Christmas.

Choking hazard due to small parts. This is not a toy.

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Serves: 10–12

Ingredients

- 200g sultanas
 - 200g raisins
 - 75g chopped dates
 - 50g candied peel
 - 100g natural colour glacé cherries, rinsed or in syrup and halved
 - 150ml brandy
 - 50ml vodka
 - 50g glacé ginger
 - 1 small Bramley apple, peeled and grated
 - The zest and juice of one orange
 - 2 large free-range eggs
 - 130g butter, softened at room temperature
 - 120g dark muscovado sugar
 - 90g fresh breadcrumbs (I like to use wholemeal)
 - 120g plain flour
 - 2 tsp ground mixed spice
 - 1 tsp ground ginger
 - A pinch of ground cloves
 - A six pence or pre-decimal sixpence
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Method

For this recipe, you will need a 1.5-litre pudding basin, some tin foil, bakers twine and baking parchment.

1. Combine the dried fruits and peel together, soak in the alcohol and leave for a couple of hours or overnight.
2. Generously butter the pudding basin. Cut two strips of baking parchment and place them in the pudding bowl in a cross, then add a small disc of baking parchment and press into the base of the basin to line.
3. Cream the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy.
4. Add in the eggs one at a time, beating in between each addition.
5. Add the apple, ginger, orange zest and juice to the bowl of soaked fruits, stir it all together then add this mix to the butter, sugar and egg mix.
6. Whisk together the flour and spices, then fold through the spiced flour and breadcrumbs, mixing well, and add in a sixpence. We like to gather any family members that are around and everyone has a ceremonial stir, whilst making a wish.
7. Spoon into the prepared pudding basin and press the mixture down with the back of a spoon. Cover the pudding with a layer of baking parchment and foil, both pleated across the middle to allow for expansion, or use foil-lined parchment as an alternative. Tie securely with string twice, leaving a handle at either side of the bowl to aid lifting in and out of your large pot or steamer and trim off excess paper and foil with scissors.
8. To steam, place the pudding in the top of a steamer filled with simmering water. Cover with a lid and steam for between 3.5 and 4 hours, topping up the water as necessary. Alternatively, place the pudding in a pan large enough for the bowl but sit the bowl on top of an upturned plate or saucer.
9. Turn out the pudding, add extra brandy and light it at the table. If you are making your pudding on Stir-up Sunday, allow it to cool, replace the baking parchment and foil with fresh and brush over the top with a little more brandy before wrapping. After you have tied it up, store the pudding in a cold and dark place.
10. To serve on Christmas Day, reheat the pudding by steaming or boiling it for around 2 hours. Turn the pudding onto a serving plate, set light to it and hunt for the sixpence.

Enjoy!

Merry Christmas Baking!

Don't forget to pop a six pence into the mix – the essential part of any Christmas pudding. Share your bakes on social media and tag us, we can't wait to see them!