

# cakes and cookies



Cake and cookie recipes to make and share!

# cakes and cookies

Written by Malcolm Long



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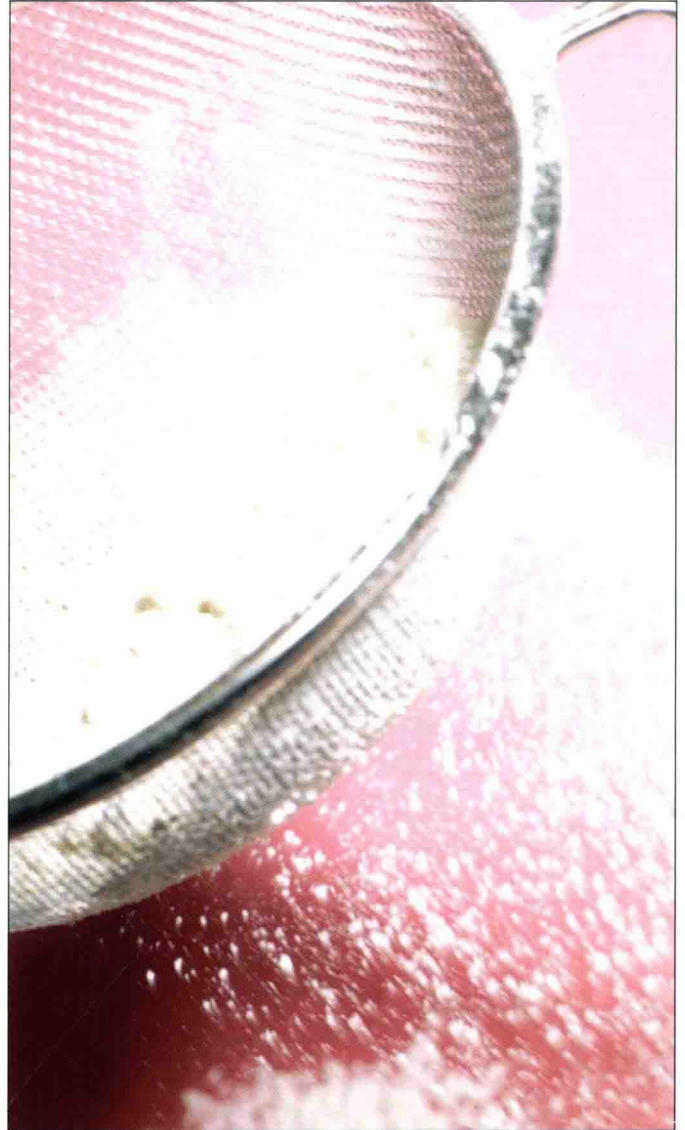
# The Joys of Baking

There is something magical and evocative of childhood about making cakes and cookies. However, very few commercially produced varieties, including even those that are very expensive, can match baking your own.

Home-baked cakes and cookies are very simple to make and many have a lightness that is irresistible, with a flavour that is only possible from something lifted from your own oven. The smells of baking are hard to beat – who doesn't relish the delicious aromas of ginger, golden syrup, the zest of orange or lemons and the smell of almonds, as they pervade your home.

Wise estate agents suggest roasting coffee prior to showing prospective clients around houses that are for sale, but a baking batch of cakes or cookies will definitely clinch the deal. Most of us have made them at some time, whether it was at school or on a rainy Saturday afternoon helping mum. Eating your home-made treats may well play havoc with your waistline, but baking them does wonders for stress and will make you very popular with friends and family.

This book includes a fantastic selection of traditional-style cakes and cookies, but also contains great new ideas for sweet treats that the whole family can enjoy: from bite-sized brownies to petit fours, meringues to sticky cereal delights and lots more that will really tantalise the taste buds.





# Equipment

**Baking cakes and cookies doesn't require an armada of tools and equipment, but you will need the essentials such as reliable kitchen scales, mixing bowls and a rolling pin. The following should also be noted to ensure your efforts run smoothly and achieve the best results.**

Try to have several different sieves. Whenever possible, sieve flours and fine sugars, or anything which may develop lumps, prior to use.

Many of us won't have the luxury of a large kitchen, but aim to work tidily and give yourself the maximum space you can afford. Clear up as you go along. This will allow you to enjoy the fruits of your labour without being confronted with a sink full of washing-up.

Remember the basic rules of hygiene: wash your hands before starting and between handling different ingredients and stages. Many tasks are much better performed manually, but hands are just like any other kitchen tool and must be kept clean.

Try to keep some good sharp knives to work with. Blunt knives are dangerous as you have to apply too much pressure to cut with them, and slips are more likely to cause damage to misplaced fingers.

Always use a clean chopping board for cutting. Cutting directly onto work surfaces will scratch them and blunt your knives.

Choose large mixing bowls which may appear larger than necessary, but will allow you to beat or whisk without the ingredients being splashed around the kitchen. If you have the kitchen space, there are various kitchen gadgets you might find useful: including food processors, mixing machines, liquidisers or hand-held electric whisks – all of which can save you time and a lot of arm ache.



# Cooking Tips

## Ovens

If you are going to do a lot of baking then a large oven, preferably forced air or fan assisted is best, since these will allow food to brown evenly in all parts of the oven. With a conventional non-assisted oven, it is safer to use only the top two shelves and to keep baking trays at least 2–3 cm apart to allow heat to circulate. You will need to swap the trays around to ensure even cooking and browning. Try also to keep them away from the walls or door of the oven to avoid the food burning.

## Baking sheets and trays

It is a good idea to buy the best baking sheets and trays you can afford. There are many varieties of non-stick trays to choose from and these are very useful and effective. However, heat-proof rubber matting and moulds are now widely available in many shapes and sizes; they are extremely easy to use and give great results. Although expensive, they are very effective when used in or out of the oven. A cheaper alternative is silicone paper which is reusable if not burnt and can be cut to any size quite easily. Whichever baking trays you choose, they should be flat with very low sides to allow the heat to travel evenly across the food being cooked.

## Temperatures

The temperatures given in this book are approximate since no two ovens are ever the same. It is also true that however strictly you follow the recipe, the mixtures will always vary slightly.

## Cooking times

To test if cakes are cooked, gently press the top. If they are firm to the touch then they should be done. To test whether cookies are done, first check the colour. Most are cooked when they have reached a pale, golden colour. Cool the cakes and cookies on wire racks before being stored. Biscuits which are to be rolled or shaped need to be formed before they cool; if they harden, a few seconds in a warm oven will soften them and allow for reshaping.

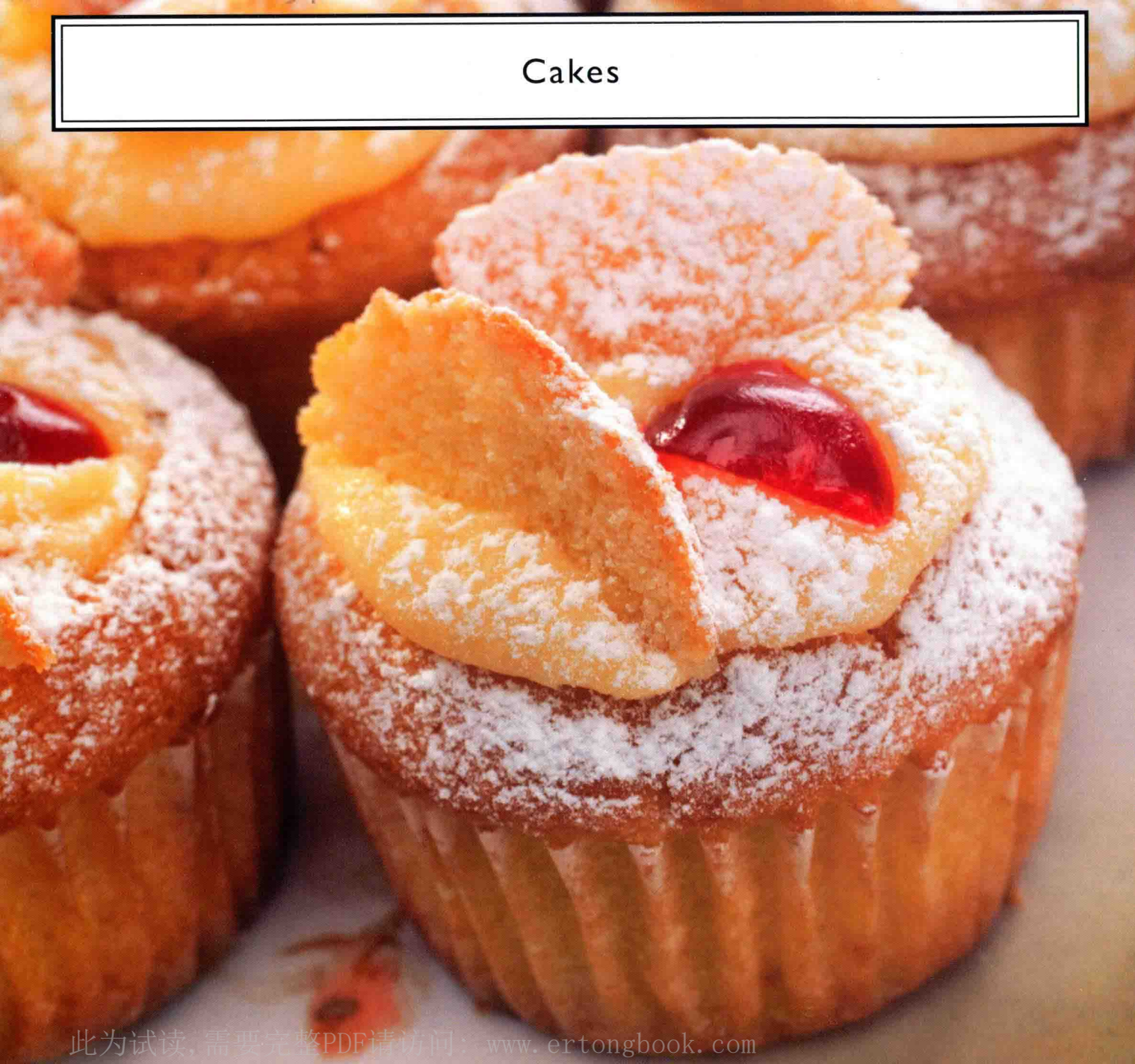
## Storage

If biscuits are to be kept for any length of time they are better stored uncooked. This is done by shaping them in the usual way on a baking sheet but placing them in the freezer instead of in the oven. When the biscuits are set, remove from the baking sheets and store between layers of cling film in a plastic box in the freezer. Cooked biscuits and cakes should always be kept in an airtight container or tin.





## Cakes





## Victoria Sponge





# Victoria Sponge

## You will need:

- 100 g (4 oz) butter
- 100 g (4 oz) caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 100 g (4 oz) self-raising flour
- 50 g (2 oz) strawberry jam
- 50 g (2 oz) whipped cream

## Serves 12

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / gas mark 4.
2. Line the two cake tins with baking parchment.
3. Mix the butter and sugar together with an electric whisk. Next, add the eggs and continue to whisk.
4. Sift the flour into the mixture with a sieve and fold in using a spoon. The mixture should be light and creamy – if it isn't add a drop of milk.
5. Divide the mixture between the cake tins and gently spread out with a spatula.
6. Place the tins in a preheated oven for 20–25 minutes, or until the cakes are golden brown.
7. Add the jam and cream to the top of one cake, sandwich both cakes together; then serve!



## Chocolate and Raspberry Cake





# Chocolate and Raspberry Cake

## You will need:

- 200 g (7 oz) butter
- 150 g (5 oz) sugar
- 3 free-range eggs
- 175 g (6 oz) self-raising flour
- 80 g (3 oz) unsweetened cocoa powder
- a few drops of vanilla essence
- 1 tbsp milk

## For the filling:

- 450 g (1 lb) mascarpone
- 15 ml (½ fl.oz) milk
- 200 g (7 oz) chocolate
- 150 g (5 oz) sifted icing sugar
- 150 g (5 oz) raspberries

## Serves 8–10

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / gas mark 4 and grease a 23 cm (9 in.) springform cake tin.
2. Cream together the butter and sugar and add the beaten eggs separately. Sift the flour and cocoa together and fold them into the egg mixture. Add a few drops of vanilla essence and the milk.
3. Transfer to the cake tin and bake in the centre of the oven for 35–40 minutes. Allow the cake to cool on a wire cooling rack.

4. Meanwhile, beat the mascarpone and milk to form a smooth cream.
5. Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Allow the chocolate to cool a little and then add it to the mascarpone. Add sifted icing sugar and mix well. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
6. Cut the cake in half and spread one-third of the chocolate mascarpone on one side. Place half of the raspberries on the filling and carefully replace the top half of the cake.
7. Use the rest of the mascarpone cream to decorate the top and sides of the cake. Finish with the remaining raspberries.



Gâteau St Honore



# Gâteau St Honore

## You will need:

- ½ small packet frozen puff pastry

## For the choux pastry:

- 80 ml (3 fl.oz) water
- 25 g (1 oz) butter
- 15 g (½ oz) sugar
- 50 g (2 oz) strong flour
- 2 eggs

## For the glaze:

- 100 g (4 oz) sugar

## For the filling:

- 4–5 sponge fingers
- 2–3 tbsp brandy
- 200 ml (7 fl.oz) whipping cream
- 25 g (1 oz) caster sugar
- a few drops of vanilla essence
- 1 tbsp pistachio nuts, chopped

## Serves 6–8

1. Roll out the puff pastry approx 3 mm (¼ in.) thick.  
Use a pastry ring or small plate to cut the pastry into a circle.
2. Lay the pastry on a sheet of silicone paper and allow to rest for an hour. Prick the base closely with a fork.

## To make the choux pastry:

1. Boil the water in a pan and add the butter and sugar. When boiling, remove from the heat and stir in the flour.

2. Return to the heat and cook until the mixture comes clearly away from the sides of the pan. Remove and allow the mixture to cool. Beat in the eggs, a little at a time.
3. Take a piping bag and, using a medium star nozzle, pipe a single ring of choux pastry around the puff pastry. Pipe six separate choux buns on another baking sheet, and bake at 200°C / 400°F / gas mark 6 until crisp.

## To make the glaze:

1. Boil the sugar with 2 tbsp water in a pan until the sugar starts to caramelise. Then, dip the base of the pan quickly into cold water.

## To assemble:

1. Dip the bases of the choux buns into the melted sugar and stick them on the top of the choux ring.
2. Use a spoon to dribble melted sugar over the choux pastry edge and over the choux buns to give a decorative edge before the sugar sets.
3. Dice the sponge fingers and soak in the brandy. Then, scatter these onto the gâteau base.
4. Whip the cream with the sugar and vanilla and pipe or spoon over the diced sponge fingers to fill the gâteau.
5. Decorate with the pistachio nuts.