

Victorian honey cakes

This simple recipe is taken from *Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery*, dated 1888. It suggests making individual square cakes, but it would do just as well cut into rounds with a biscuit cutter. Note that you will need a fine grater for the lemon rind and a very fine one for the nutmeg.

2 oz butter

8 oz honey

A small lemon

2 oz nibbed almonds

One-eighth of a nutmeg, grated

8 oz plain flour

½ oz bicarbonate of soda

A teaspoonful of flaked almonds

A teaspoonful of candied peel

Instead of the almonds and peel, you might prefer to ice the cakes, using the juice of the lemon and:

4 oz icing sugar

Grate off the lemon rind. Grate the nutmeg. Dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in a little warm water.

Melt the butter in a saucepan, and pour in the honey. Stir while it boils for a few moments.

Let the honey and butter cool a little, and stir in the lemon rind, the almonds, the nutmeg, the flour and, last, the bicarbonate of soda. Celebrate with a cup of tea. Leave the mixture for a few hours or overnight.

Turn on the oven to heat to 180°C / 350°F. Butter a baking tray. Roll the mixture out about half an inch thick and cut into squares. Unless you plan to ice the cakes, decorate with a few flaked almonds and blobs of candied peel.

Put the squares on the baking tray and bake for 25 minutes or until done.

Icing: Add the lemon juice to the icing sugar little by little, stirring all the time, until the icing is spreadable, like warm butter. You may need to add a little water. Spread the icing on the cakes.

Mmm... delicious!

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